

Rockbrook TY Programme

Wider Horizons



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What is Wider Horizons?

Wider Horizons is the name for Rockbrook's one-year bridging programme, undertaken in Transition Year (TY), that enables students to develop in a broad range of personal skills and ultimately approach Senior Cycle with greater ability, confidence and maturity.

The programme is designed to shift our students from being dependent on teacher-led learning to independent, self-directed learning.

Wider Horizons is a project-based programme and assessment takes place in various ways during the year.



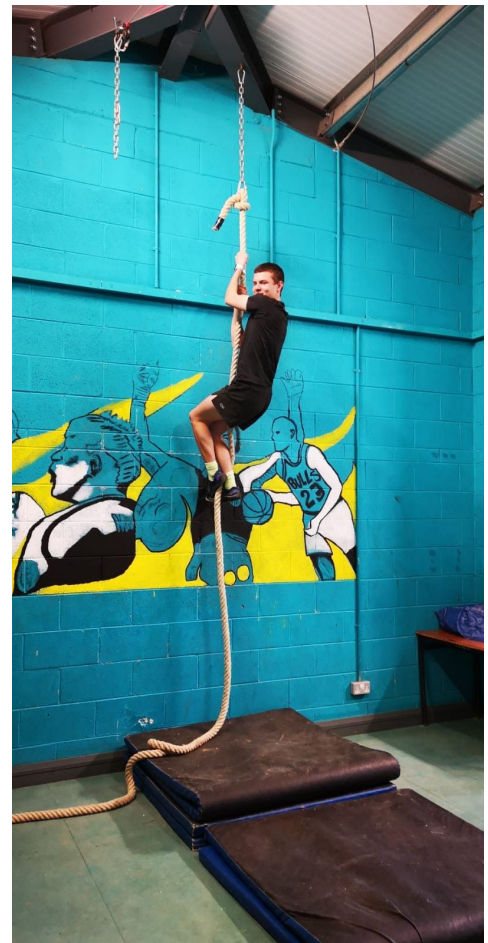
Picture: TY students working on the World War I trench in Rockbrook.

In February/March of each year, the TY Coordinator meets 3rd Years and their parents to share all relevant information and emphasise the importance of participation in the Wider Horizons programme for their son's social, intellectual and personal development.

Aims & Objectives

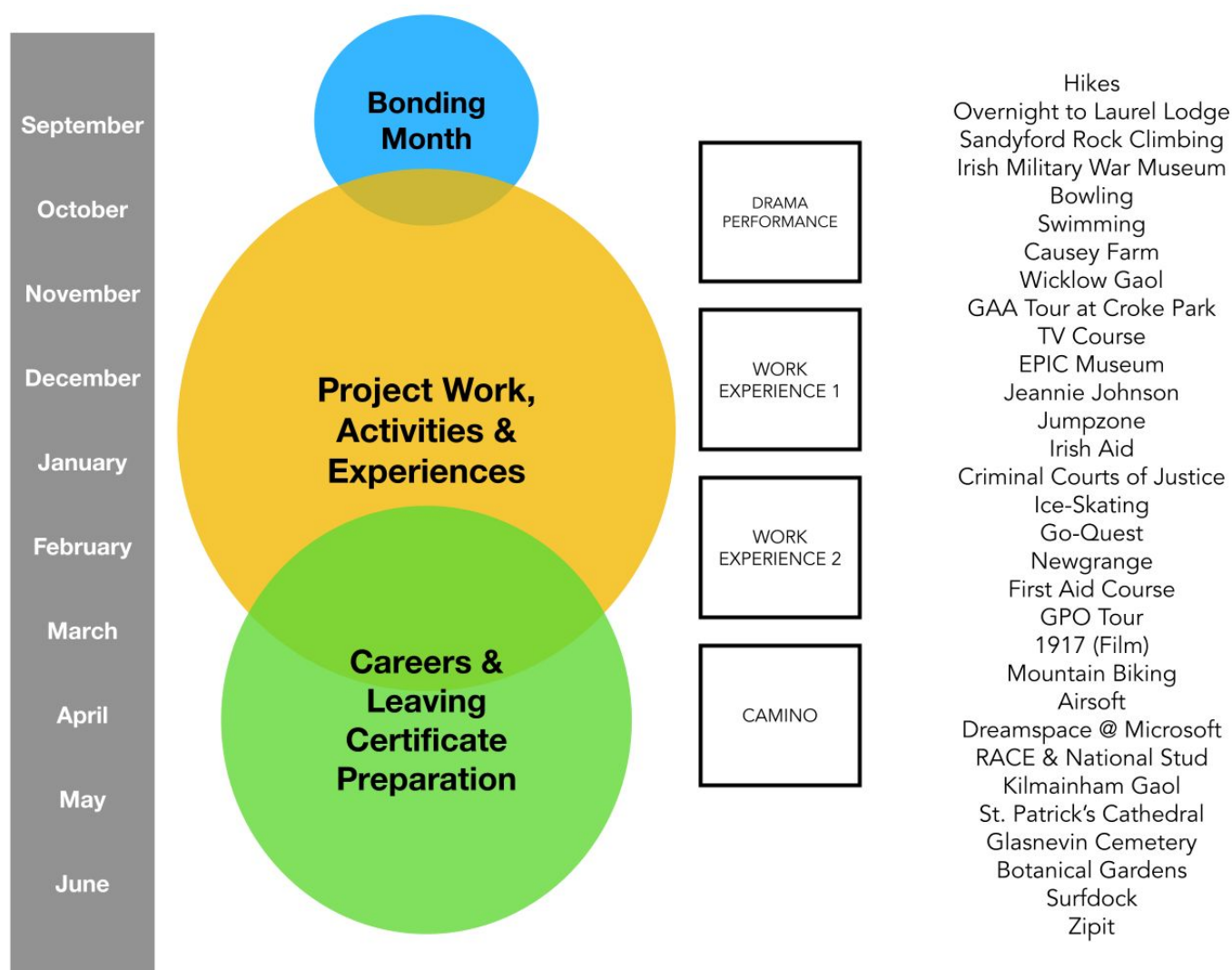
The aims & objectives of the *Wider Horizons* programme are:

- To give students the space and opportunities to mature and develop by focussing on leadership, responsibility and respect.
- To enable students to take responsibility for their own learning.
- To prepare students for the Leaving Certificate and beyond through the development of key skills such as organisation, time management and collaboration.
- To strengthen numeracy and literacy skills in preparation for the Leaving Certificate.
- To help students develop their own sense of self-awareness and an ability to reflect and think about the future.
- To give students a taste of the world of work through two work experience weeks as well as a careers module and guest speakers.
- Promotion of general, technical and academic skills with an emphasis on interdisciplinary and self-directed learning.
- To further enhance camaraderie and friendships in the class through Thursday activities, bonding events and walking the *Camino de Santiago* in Spain.
- To foster the student's personal growth, development and confidence.
- To prepare students for their role as autonomous, participative and responsible members of society.
- To encourage students to become competent in oral presentations.
- To promote the effective use of digital devices for learning.
- To give students the opportunity to challenge themselves through a myriad of experiences.
- To help students in their process of self-discovery.



Year Overview

Some key activities are illustrated below with some typical Thursday activities listed on the right. Project work is at the core of TY and gives students the opportunity to develop many new and existing skills. Towards the end of the year focus turns to the next stage of the learning journey, Senior Cycle.



Please note: the Thursday activities listed above are a sample from previous years and not a confirmed list of next year's activities.

Course Subjects

The wider horizons programme includes **core subjects** such as

English	Spanish	PE
Irish	Religion & Philosophy	Business
Maths	Leadership	Art/Music

Core subjects run for the whole year.

Students will also complete **specially designed modules** such as

Careers	The Outdoor Man	Chemistry
Classical Studies	Economics	Geography
Biology	History	Media Studies
I.T.	Physics	

Modules usually run for half of the year.

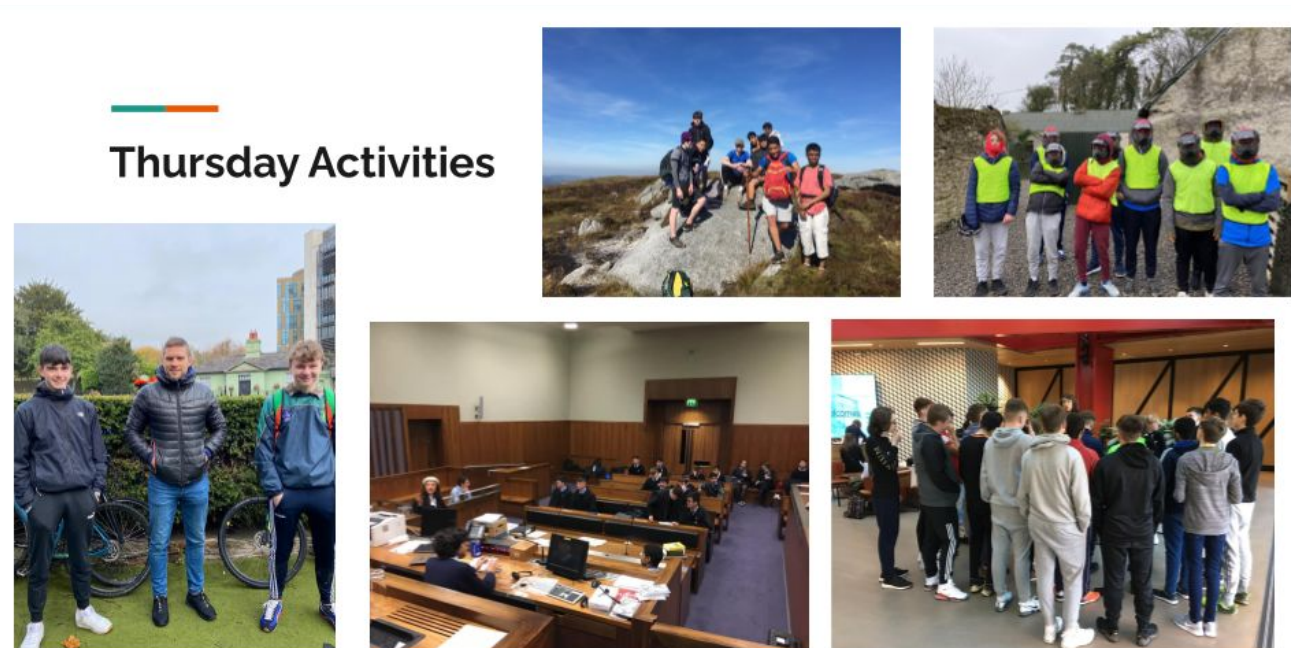


Photo: TY students enjoying some downtime during the *Outdoor Man* module

Thursday activities

TY students partake in an activity every Thursday throughout the year. They begin the day by attending a class with the TY Coordinator at 9am and the activities begin at 9.40am. The TY activities are either directly linked to the curriculum or are skills-based and every effort is made to incorporate them into a specific subject curriculum.

With most activities involving external trips, the Thursday activities are often the highlight of the week for students. They offer many opportunities to develop skills such as teamwork, leadership and planning, as well as reinforcing learning in a practical way.



Photos: The photos above give a snapshot of some Thursday activities. They include hikes in the Wicklow Mountains, team getting ready for airsoft activity, a tour of Microsoft Dreamspace, students observing justice in action in the Central Criminal Courts and two of our GAA players meeting Dublin legend Conel Keaney whilst biking in the Phoenix Park.

Extra-Curricular Activities

TY is an ideal year to get involved in new activities, initiatives and competitions. We see this as a key part of our students progression to becoming independent, ambitious learners. Rockbrook TY students have always represented the school with pride in external events and competitions. These include:

- BT Young Scientist Exhibition
- Debating
- Student enterprise awards
- Young reporters for the environment
- European youth parliament
- Art competitions



Extra Curricular opportunities



Rockbrook clubs and committees are often spearheaded by TY students. They include:

- Green School committee
- Art Club
- Padel Club
- Student council & Clann leadership
- Debating club

Photos: Rockbrook Young Scientists 2021, Mini-business Christmas market, sports training.

An Gaisce - The President's Award

All TY students will partake in the Bronze President Award from An Gaisce. To achieve the bronze award students must complete 13 hours of activities in each of the following areas:

1. Personal skill
2. Physical activity
3. Community involvement

They will choose one of them to do an additional 13 hours in. To complete the whole award they must also undertake a fourth challenge:

4. An Adventure activity.

The Camino is usually the adventure activity for most students (see page 10 for more info).

At the end of the year, students who have completed all challenges will be awarded their award on behalf of the President of Ireland. The President's award is an internationally recognised award.



For more details see www.gaisce.ie

Work Experience

Overview

Work Experience is an integral part of the TY programme and helps to prepare students for the world of work. It encourages students to take initiative, build confidence, develop social skills and work as part of a team. It also allows them to broaden their interests, discover personal strengths and areas in which they can improve.

Planning

Work Experience will take place for two week-long blocks, which are set in the school calendar. Dates are set before the end of 3rd year so that students have plenty of time to organise their work experiences. They generally take place during:

- November - Work placement 1
- February - Work placement 2

In order to support students and parents in their preparation for TY Work Experience, the following steps are taken:

3rd Year (February/March):

- The TY Co-ordinator speaks to incoming TYs and their parents about Work Experience. Dates, formal procedures and the value of the placements and organising them well in advance are discussed.

TY Induction (September of TY):

- As part of their Careers class, TY students are prepared for their Work Experience. Some of the topics covered are: Garda Vetting, insurance, problem scenarios, expectations of employers, health and safety, appearance (grooming/appropriate attire as directed by the school and place of employment), recording their learning etc.

During TY:

- Students work with the TY Coordinator to ensure paperwork is up to date and they take responsibility for completing Work Experience reviews which are then incorporated into their final record of achievement.

Camino

Overview

Rockbrook TY students have been going on the Camino for over ten years. The Camino has become the established TY trip as it covers a number of educational objectives such as physical activity, cultural experience, team-bonding and character and faith formation. It has been one of the great success stories of Rockbrook and students often refer to it as their best experience while in school, or out of school for that matter.

Camino de Santiago

Easter 2022



Dates and Cost

The Camino is usually timetabled to begin during the last school week before Easter holidays and runs into the holidays by a few days. The total cost of the Camino is normally around €600 which includes flights, accommodation, food and transfers.

Before the trip takes place, a number of preparatory hikes are organised and the TY Coordinator prepares the students so that they are ready to get the most from the Camino experience.

Assessment and Reporting

Project work is a key pillar of TY. Students will work on projects as part of most subjects. By the end of the year the students will have produced a body of work that they can be proud of. The objective is that as the year develops, the standard of project work will improve due to ongoing feedback, advice and reflection.

Students will be assessed both on their project booklets (culmination of all project work) and on their general application and work rate.

Parents will receive written reports on their son's progress. There are typically two standard school reports each year.



Photo: TY students taking a well earned break during a hike in the Wicklow Mountains.

Careers and Senior Cycle Preparation

DATs

Pearson's Differential Aptitude Tests, more commonly known as the DATs, are a series of tests designed to measure one's abilities in different fields, such as verbal reasoning, numerical reasoning, mechanical reasoning, and space relations. TY students can use this information to help guide decisions about future careers and subject choices.

LC Subject Choices

Details of subject choice are contained in the 'Progression to Senior Cycle' booklet which is made available to TY students in the course of the year.

Careers Class

Students have their Careers module in Term 2 of TY. They will also have contact with the school careers guidance counsellor prior to choosing their Senior Cycle subjects.

Guest Speakers

Throughout TY, the students will host guest speakers who will tell them about their careers and career progression. Often the guests are past pupils, making the message more relatable.

Leaving Certificate preparation

Towards the end of TY the aim is to get students to start to shift mindsets into Senior Cycle mode. They will meet with the 5th year Year Head who will start to prepare them so that once they start 5th year in September, the transition will be truly complete.

TY Graduation

There will be a graduation ceremony for TY students in May. The graduation will be a celebration of the work and successes that the students have completed during the year. There will also be a number of awards conferred to students who have stood out in their attitudes and achievements.



Photo: Past pupils Cathal and Nam addressing TYs during a careers talk.

Other Information

Drama

Drama has been at the core of the TY experience for a number of years now and each year the TY group will be involved in at least one drama production. In recent years they have included:

- Rockbrook Halloween show
- Christmas Shows
- 'TY in the Trenches', a WW1 production.
- Irish language short films.

Drama & Performance



Photos: Above are some images from previous TY drama productions

Rockbrook as a Green School

Rockbrook is taking many steps to be a leading and innovative green school. TY will have a big role to play in this. They include:

- Litter and waste management
- Developing and implementing biodiversity & pollinator plans
- Rockbrook Nature Walk and education room
- Beekeeping in Rockbrook Apiary
- Growing food



Photos: Rockbrook bee hives, butterfly path maintenance, TY-produced nature walk sign, Green school committee meeting by zoom.

Parental involvement

Parental involvement and engagement is key to a successful TY year. Open communication is encouraged and there will be invitational events for parents such as coffee mornings, Camino preparation hikes, information evenings and the graduation ceremony. As with any other year, parents are encouraged to engage with individual teachers on specific subject related issues.

Further Information

For addition details use contact information below:

General Queries: secretary@rockbrook.ie

TY specific queries: cpreston@rockbrook.ie

The TY Coordinator and Year Head is Mr. Codie Preston.

Lots of information is available at www.rockbrook.ie