

# My Three Weeks in Ireland

A School Mobility Report — Dundalk, March 2025

Clément Liebart · Seconde BFI

"Leaving France for three weeks to live, study and discover another European culture is not simply a school trip; it is a lesson that no teacher can teach."



# Three Weeks, Three Chapters

## Week 1

Arrival · First days at DGS · Settling in with the host family  
Belfast excursion

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2

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## Week 3

School continues · Newgrange & Drogheda · Farewell events

## Week 2

Full school programme · Day trip to Dublin · Carlingford



# Living with an Irish Family

## The Family

Florence, Madeleine, Michael & Karen — warmth from day one

## Full Immersion

No French spoken at home — English every moment

## Irish Rhythms

Tea at 5:30pm · Builder's tea always · Traditional music in the evenings

"Their kindness made me feel at home from the very first day."

# Two Schools, Two Worlds

🌐 SECONDE BFI VS TRANSITION YEAR

## 🇫🇷 Seconde BFI — France

- No uniform — own clothes
- Academically demanding from day one
- Graded assessments count for future choices
- Teacher-led, formal instruction
- School day: 8am–5pm+
- Part-time jobs rare before university

## 🇮🇪 Transition Year — DGS Ireland

- Compulsory uniform — blazer & tie
- **No formal exams** — no grades that count
- Subjects change every term — total freedom
- Students lead; teachers mentor
- School day: 9am–4pm
- Many students have part-time jobs

"In France we learn to answer. In Ireland, they learn to question."

# Transition Year — Ireland's Unique Idea

AN EXAM-FREE YEAR WITH NO EQUIVALENT IN FRANCE

Inserted between Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate — the **only year** with absolutely no exams. Purpose: become a more *rounded person*, not just a better student.

Some students even had **drone racing classes** — unthinkable in a French lycée.

"TY students are visibly more confident, socially mature and comfortable with the unexpected."



Drone Racing



Sewing Classes



Work Experience



Community  
Volunteering

# Beyond the Classroom — Two Ways of Life



## Food & Mealtimes

🇫🇷 Long formal lunch · 🇮🇪 "Tea" at 5:30pm, full Irish breakfast, tea all day



## Social Life

🇫🇷 Reserved, café culture · 🇮🇪 Warm, chatty — "the craic," pub as community living room



## Religion & Society

🇫🇷 Strict laïcité · 🇮🇪 Catholic ethos visible in daily life



# Discovering the Island



## Dublin

Trinity College · Book of Kells ·  
Temple Bar · Ha'penny Bridge



## Belfast

Titanic Museum · Peace Walls ·  
Political murals — a city slowly  
healing



## Newgrange

5,000-year-old tomb — older  
than the pyramids and  
Stonehenge



## Carlingford

Medieval village · King John's  
Castle · Carlingford Lough

"I understood the people who lived there before us."



# The Human Side of Mobility

## 1 First Days

Anxious – every conversation a challenge

## 2 By Week Two

Thinking in English, not translating from French

## 3 The Real Gain

3 weeks of immersion – more interactions than in classroom English

"All of them were at ease speaking to someone they didn't know – genuinely happy to meet someone from abroad."



# The Bigger Picture — Why European Mobility Matters



## Language

Full immersion accelerates progress in a way no classroom can replicate



## Personal Growth

Navigating a new school and culture builds resilience and confidence



## European Citizenship

Erasmus+ has supported over **12 million people** since 1987 — no visas, no borders

"Understanding each other is the foundation of European unity."

# A Lesson No Teacher Can Teach

"The best lessons are not written on a whiteboard. They happen at a dinner table, in a school corridor, at the foot of a 5,000-year-old monument — or over yet another cup of Irish tea."

Meeting Florence, Madeleine, Michael, Karen and my new classmates reminded me that kindness and curiosity are not limited by language or nationality.

## Merci — Go raibh maith agat

*"Go raibh maith agat" means "Thank you" in Irish Gaelic*

