

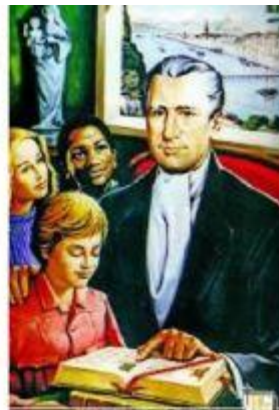
# Transition Policy

Ratified by BOG: June 2016

Reviewed: April 2019

Ratified by BOG: May 2019

*Amendments in Sections 1 & 3 relating to new practice since original policy was written ie 'Getting Ready To Learn' programme in Nursery & developments within Transitions arrangements in Key stages 2 & 3.*



# **Transition**

## **There are 5 sections to this policy:**

**Section 1: Transition into our Nursery**

**Section 2: Transition from Pre -School to Primary 1**

**Section 3: Transition from Primary to Post Primary School**

**Section 4: Transition for pupils transferring to St Clare's Abbey from another primary school.**

**Section 5: Transition for pupils transferring from St Clare's Abbey to another primary school.**

This policy was written in the context of DENI Circular 2015/11- Guidance on induction and transition in Pre-School and Year One. But a lot of the practice cited within is based on carefully tried and tested methods which have proved very effective in helping our pupils make transitions at challenging times in their lives.

## Section 1:

### Transition into our Nursery.

We fully appreciate how privileged we are to have our own Nursery within St Clare's Abbey. We realise that providing the highest quality 'first steps' in the educational journey of our pupils is reliant on us developing welcoming, nurturing and supportive relationships with:

1. The parents and other significant adults in their lives who link with school
2. Other agencies that may have worked with the child.

### Parents: Parents:

We realise that parents are taking a huge 'leap of faith' when they entrust their precious children into our care and whilst this is true throughout primary school life it is particularly so at the very early Nursery stage. We feel that it is crucial that parents realise that we want to learn all about their child so that we can do our very best to help him/her settle into the exciting, loving world of Nursery and experience the optimum start to his/her education. We want parents to know that we are honoured to be acting 'in loco parentis' and we will do all in our power to inspire their confidence and trust from the outset. To do this we follow a carefully considered 'Settling In' programme which is detailed fully in the Nursery Welcome Pack, but in summary it involves:

- **Two induction sessions held in May and June in the Nursery.** During the first, the parents are invited to sample our Nursery through observing the existing children at play. They will sample indoor and outdoor play and also be informed about the Pre school curriculum and important Settling in arrangements. This visit will be solely for adults. During the second invitation to Nursery in June, the new pupils will accompany their parents. This will be a Stay and Play session. . At this meeting the parents are shown round each area of the classroom .They are shown the routines for each area and are urged to take photographs and share these at home with their child over the summer to help him/her grow in familiarity .
- **A face to face 'Getting to Know You' meeting** where parent(s) and their child meet with Mrs Bennett and share stories about their child's personality, interests, strengths and any areas which they feel may be worrying/difficult. The child and teacher will also have an opportunity to chat and get to know each other without the presence of other class mates. These meetings happen in the first few days of September before the pupils enrol.
- **Very pastoral arrangements for settling the child in days 1 & 2.** Parents are asked to be available for these days with the understanding that they can 'withdraw from sight' when their child seems happy. This arrangement rarely needs to be continued beyond day 2, but it will be sympathetically extended as needed to help any pupil who is having difficulty 'settling.'
- **A 'Settling in Review' held in October** at which the teacher and parent communicate about the child's: Emotional Well- Being, Speech and Language (In

light of The Wellcomm assessment administered at the end of September) and any other learning/ pastoral matters arising.

- Throughout the remainder of the year parents' views will be actively sought via questionnaires loaded onto the Nursery section of the website and a suggestions box prominently displayed in the parents' waiting area.

**We actively pursue high levels of parental engagement and communication throughout St Clare's Abbey but particularly in Nursery. It is essential if the transition into Nursery is going to be as good as it can be.**

#### **Other agencies.**

As part of the Nursery settling in, the Head of Nursery undertakes, where relevant, comprehensive liaison with:

- Sure Start 2-year programme staff
- *Rainbow Den staff (For pupils with AEN)*
- Orana Pre -school staff and
- Toybox (For Traveller children)

#### **Section 2:**

##### **Transition from Pre -School to Primary 1**

To make transition as smooth as possible we invest huge energy in developing three areas:

1. Links with our Pre-school providers
2. Induction visit(s) for Parents and Pupils
3. Exchange of information with our parents during the early Primary 1 days. (We foster strong parental relationships at all times in school, but we recognise that the very earliest relationships are crucial)

##### **1.Links with our Pre School providers:**

Our main pre-school feeder is our own Nursery. 52 pupils avail of part time places. Most transfer to St Clare's Abbey.

To ensure that we make the most of our close links with the Nursery we:

- Engage in a cross phase staff support programme. At suitable times throughout the year, a session per week sees the Nursery teacher and assistant swap with P1 teacher and classroom assistant. This allows the P1 staff to gain a valuable insight into the routines and learning that take place in the Nursery setting and assists the development of effective progression and continuity.
- Include our Nursery teacher in P1 planning sessions at key points in the year to ensure that progression and continuity re all aspects of learning and skills development are in place.
- Work together on a shared programme to support Speech and Language difficulties using shared staff expertise and a speech therapist employed to deliver intervention programmes.

- Have a very close working relationship between Head of Nursery & SENCO to ensure that the needs of pupils with SEN are identified and supported early.
- Invite our Nursery classes to school events in the primary, throughout the year to give a general sense of the Primary School as an extension of their Nursery and to the P1 classes in June to familiarise the pupils with what will become their new learning environment.
- Arrange for P1 teachers to attend the Nativity play, graduation ceremony and other celebrations so that Nursery pupils fully recognise them as key members of their school experience.
- 'Link up' digitally via 'Face time' & 'Collaborate' throughout term 3 to allow the Nursery pupils to become familiar with the P1 routines.
- Create the first P1 planner for Play with the input of all pre-school partners.
- Hold 'Handover' sessions at which Mrs Bennett shares personalised academic and pastoral insights with each of the three P1 teachers who are receiving pupils from her Nursery.
- For those pupils not transferring to St. Clare's Abbey P1, the uniforms of their transfer schools are displayed

We also enrol pupils from a selection of other pre-school providers, these include:

- Windmill Playgroup
- Dominican @ Orana Playgroup
- Ashgrove Nursery School
- Rascals and Ruffians Playgroup
- Montessori Pre -School

To ensure that we develop the closest possible working relationship with such a wide group of providers we:

- Develop as close a working relationship as possible with each (The strength of the relationship varies and is naturally qualified by the number of pupils we tend to receive from each, year on year) Mrs Cribbin, Foundation Stage co-ordinator and Mrs Toner -SENCO make contact with the pre-schools throughout the year starting with:
  1. Meetings with Windmill pre-school, (we get a lot of pupils from this playgroup) to discuss plans for community based Speech and Language support programme. (SENCO, Mrs Toner is the link person for this.)
  2. December visits to each other's' sites to see Christmas celebrations and to advertise the P1 enrolment process.
  3. Visits, once P1 offers have been made to gather pastoral and academic background to each transferring pupil. (Mrs Cribbin, head of FS meets with the relevant pre - school providers as does the SENCO, Mrs Toner to gather information to feed into SEN provision where applicable.)

In addition to the above, Mrs Cribbin actively pursues ways of developing links with these pre-school partners with a view to developing a strengthening relationship re planning, pedagogy and skills development akin to those that exist between our P1 teachers and Head of Nursery. Each year a

draft first planner co-written with our own head of Nursery is brought to the pre -schools for their input in light of the pupils that they are transferring to us.

## **2. Induction visit:**

We host a '**Getting to Know Each Other**' session in June, where all prospective P1 pupils and their families are invited into school for an afternoon.

The pupils spend the afternoon at play in P1 and have an opportunity to meet their new class mates, P7 school leaders and P1 staff.

Simultaneously parents meet with Mrs Cribbin (Foundation Stage co-ordinator), P1 teachers, Mrs Toner (SENCO), Mr Sweeney & Mrs Monaghan. Guidance and information are given via a power point presentation and a 'Welcome Pack'

### **Practical arrangements and information for starting P1 are distributed including:**

- **Starting date-** all pupils start in week 1(6-8 per day).
- **Finishing time** – 12pm in week 1 and 3 days of week 2, on days 4 & 5 of week 2 pupils will stay for lunch and playground time. By week 3 all pupils will be in school for the full week  
*(An exception will be made for pupils who are having difficulty, a shorter day for such pupils will be facilitated at teacher discretion, with guidance from Mrs Cribbin.)*
- Settling arrangements for pupils who haven't been to pre-school
- Overview of the school day
- Information re Uniform/ school bag/ Outdoor Play/ Toileting accidents/ PE kit requirements etc.
- Snack/ lunch/ Playtime arrangements

### **Pastoral overview for P1 including:**

- Overview of our school aims, mission statement, motto and crest and what these mean in real terms.
- Synopsis of key school pastoral policies e.g. Child Protection, Anti- Bullying, Policy for Promoting Positive Behaviour, Intimate Care etc.
- Discussion re the Faith Based education offered in St Clare's Abbey and the partnership that will be developed between home and school to foster this. An overview of the Liturgical year and some simple resources will be provided e.g. Guardian Angel Prayer, Holy Water and Rosary Beads.

- The school website will be promoted as a window into the life of St Clare's Abbey and each parent's child's experience in particular.

#### **Curricular overview for P1:**

- Overview of the Primary 1 curriculum is provided.
- Guidance is provided re the role parents need to play to help school help their child achieve to his /her potential. (Some tips for developing readiness for learning are shared.)
- SENCO (Mrs Toner) explains her role in working with pupils who experience barriers to their learning and the relationship she will develop with any child and his/her parents in this situation.

#### **3. Gathering information from our parents during the early Primary 1 days.**

- Prior to each P1 child's start date the P1 teacher meets with him/her and his/her parent(s) for a personalised meeting. It has a dual purpose:

First it allows the teacher and parent to build up a picture of the child's strengths, interests, any little areas of concern and background information.

Second it enables the teacher to gather information pertaining to the child's readiness for learning and knowledge to date as per the observation sheet prepared by Mrs Cribbin. (See appendix for teacher observation check.)

#### **Section 3:**

#### **Transition from Primary to Post Primary School**

We completed two years of the EA 'Transitions' project and during that time we strengthened our links with key post primary partners. This project has now finished and we welcome the new direction in which links are being made with all post primary partners, sharing the technology that can be used by children in both schools to ease transition.

Read & Write is a software tool from text help to help SEN pupils improve in Literacy. This software is available to use in school and at home by secondary level pupils. Two of our local schools, St. Mary's and St. Joseph's are working with us in the development of this programme in order to ease transition for our pupils between our schools.

Whilst meetings have always taken place to facilitate post primary partners gathering pastoral information for pupils transferring to them, the focus of these meetings now addresses passing on academic information also in a much more holistic manner than on previous occasions when this would have been merely the exchange of test results. We hope that this will be of huge benefit and we wish to extend this practice into our exchanges with other schools.

Our Year 7 pupils enjoy 'transition days' spent in post primary schools and we always ensure that members of our own staff participate to enhance the insights gained into post primary life when the children return to our school.

We provide work placement opportunities for pupils from our post primary partner schools and one of the benefits of these sessions is that year 7 pupils share contact with post primary pupils from the school they will be attending. Q & A sessions between the groups take place and these are so beneficial on a pastoral and in practical terms.

**Transition arrangements for pupils transferring from our ECPD:** We invite staff from the post primary schools to see our pupils at work and play in their own context. This gives us the opportunity to share insights re these pupils who have particularly complex needs.

Transition for them is particularly daunting and we strive to make this as smooth as possible. Our transferring pupils are afforded the opportunities to spend time in their post primary setting in the P7 year.

#### **Section 4:**

##### **Transition for pupils transferring to St Clare's Abbey from another primary school.**

Parent(s) and child attend for an induction visit. They meet with their new teacher and vice-principal/principal and are given a tour of the school, an overview of the programme of work for the year and a synopsis of key pastoral and curricular arrangements. (Additional signposting to website is provided to supplement this.)

Contact is made with the previous school and records are requested re academic/ pastoral information. Where child is recognised as Newcomer his CEFR will be requested and when SEN his



IEP/ SEN documentation will be requested. Where LAC has his personal LAC plan will be sought. On all occasions a copy of assessment results and the most recent school report will be requested

**Section 5:**

**Transition for pupils transferring from St Clare's Abbey to another primary school.**

The same arrangements in reverse will be made, with us providing the information and documentation to the new school.