**DEIS Plan 2023-2026**

**Parental Involvement Strategy for St Oliver Plunkett N.S. Navan**

**Aims**

* Maintain the participation of those parents already involved in the school
* Recruit more reluctant parents through new initiatives
* Monitor the attendance of parents at Parent Teacher Meetings
* Monitor the attendance of parents at HSCL Courses
* Communicate life of the school clearly to parents through school website, Twitter, School Newsletter, Informal meetings and email
* Encourage parents to partake in the life of the school by fostering a culture of inclusion and welcome
* Clearly communicate the identity and role of our HSCL teacher Mr Anthony McDonagh
* Ensure that the school has procedures in place to promote attendance/participation.
* Develop, subject to available resources, links between the school and the families of children who may be at risk of developing attendance problems.
* Identify and remove, insofar as is practicable, obstacles to parental involvement in the school.

**Responsibilities of Stakeholders**

**School**

* Communicate with parents/guardians and keep them up to date on the progress of their children
* Develop strategies for parents to give their opinions /thoughts on school life
* HSCL teacher will identify courses of interest and benefit to the parents
* Create a warm welcoming environment for parents when they visit the school
* Organise a Junior Infant Induction Day each year to inform parents in relation to the organisation and routine of the school
* Identify opportunities to involve parents in school celebrations like Musicals, Active Schools Weeks, Intercultural days etc
* Develop a close working relationship with the Parents Association
* Treat all parents/guardians with respect

**Parents/Guardians**

* Inform themselves on the day to day events in the school by reading emails, the school website and school newsletters
* Attend Parent Teacher meetings in November
* Attend school events such as Musicals, schools finals, Christmas Plays, Sacramental days & Graduation days if possible
* Monitor children’s work from school and keep informed of their development
* Encourage the development of a positive attitude towards the school with their children
* Enrich the school environment by offering their skills and knowledge to enhance different aspects of the school
* Inform themselves on the school’s policy across a wide range of issues
* Treat school teachers & staff with respect
* Present children in school on time ready to learn

**Pupils**

* Pupils should inform parents of different activities in the school
* Pupils should deliver home different communications from the school

**Strengths of the school in relation to Parental Involvement**

**HSCL**

* HSCL teacher Anthony McDonagh is in regular contact with the parent body and provides a very effective link between school and home.
* The HSCL teacher is a daily presence at our front gate meeting the parents as they arrive to school as well as being a visible figure at all school events.
* The role also involves dealing with attendance issues and ensuring that the lines of communication between home and school are open.
* Besides home visits courses are provided for parents to up skill in various ways such as IT, Literacy, Fitness, Diet and Parenting.
* There are many initiatives within the school which encourage parents to feel part of our school community. HSCL initiatives: Maths for fun, science for fun, sewing for parents, English language classes for parents, Irish language classes or parents, ICT/ iPad classes, literacy/ numeracy classes, cookery, Flower arranging, seasonal activities

**School Communication System**

The Aladdin Student Management System makes it easier to communicate with parents through text, email and newsletter. It is a very efficient system that allows direct communication and keeps parents excellently informed of the business of the school. Detailed Newsletters are sent out each month informing parents of the happenings in St Oliver’s.

**Parents Association**

The school has a vibrant Parents Association that works with Principal and staff in the school. It is an excellent resource in tackling issues that relate to attendance and pre-empting difficulties before they arise. The Principal/Deputy Principal attends these meetings and it is a very useful way of communicating in both directions. The Parents Association is an excellent representative body to meet with in relation to formulation of policies in different areas of the school. The Principal & Deputy Principal attend Parents Association meetings.

**Literacy Programme**

The school provides a variety of literacy programmes that are detailed in our 3 year Literacy plan. These initiatives make the development of literacy skills more accessible. They also encourage children to read with parents/guardians at home in a paired reading like approach. It becomes clear to parents the work that is being carried out to develop their children’s literacy ability.

**EAL Programme**

Dedicated teacher for support of EAL programmes in place in the school which makes settling in easier for children from families that do not have English as a first language. This helps to remove the language barrier for certain families and makes the school more accessible

**Assembly**

Senior Assembly is held every second Friday which rewards positive behaviour including attendance. Golden Trophy is held every other Friday for the children from Junior Infants to 1st Class. This is particularly important in communicating to younger children and their families. Families of classespewrforming at Assembly receive a text prior to assembly inviting their attendance

**Extra-Curricular Activities**

Sporting teams and activities are supported in the school with visiting coaches in Football, Athletics, Hurling, Rounders, Basketball, Soccer and Rugby. There is a vibrant sporting community in the school and participation is very much encouraged across the school community. Sport is a great diversion and children are encouraged to train with their friends. Parents regularly attend games and competitions which enriches the experience for the children and helps to enhance that sense of school community.

**Drama**

Our school has now become renowned for our end of year musical which is a great source of fun for the children in 6th class. Christmas plays are an integral part of the school calendar also. They again offer scope for parental involvement in relation to props, costumes, set design and ticket sales.

**A Positive School Environment**

St Oliver Plunkett Primary School is a welcoming place and prides itself in caring for children of all backgrounds. Children feel a sense of belonging and are encouraged to attend and participate. The school is very central to the north Navan community

**Building Improvements**

We have recently made improvements around the school with additions such as Sensory gardens, a refurbished Library and an updated IT system. A walking track has been added since the last plan also which is a wonderful outlet for the school. An agreement is in place with the adjacent soccer club for continued shared use of the soccer grounds giving us a wonderful amount of space. Parents are involved in helping with the upkeep of many of these areas as part of our school gardening committee.

**Parent Teacher Meetings**

Parent Teacher Meetings take place in late November. This year we resumed face to face meetings. The Principal is fully supportive of a welcoming and open school ethos. Teachers are available at all times by appointment and on a more informal basis as the need arises. The school promotes an open door welcoming ethos.

**Junior Infant Induction Day**

Every May we facilitate the Induction of our new Junior Infants. Parents are introduced to Principal, Deputy Principal, Class teachers, SET teachers and the HSCL teacher. They receive an Induction Pack with prospectus as well as seeing the school at work. It is a warm welcoming environment in which to welcome parents.

**Coffee Mornings**

The HSCL teacher will host Coffee Mornings for different class groupings in order to facilitate parental mingling and further enhance parental Involvement in the school. There is also Grandparents Day which encourages another generation of families to visit our school.

**Action Team Partnership Meetings**

Parents are heavily involved in giving their views on different policies used throughout the school. Child Safeguarding & Risk Assessment, Critical Incident, Code of Behaviour & Acceptable Use policies are all examples of areas where there is strong parental involvement.

**Parents Groups**

Parents Choir & Gardening Group are all groups that exist within the school to facilitate Parental Involvement.

**Challenges for the school in relation to Parental Involvement**

**COVID 19**

The pandemic has had a big effect on the involvement of parents in the school. It is only in the last few months that we had opened up again for events like Christmas Plays and musicals. It will take time for the free interaction that existed before to take hold in the school.

**Language barrier**

When trying to implement strategies or communicate practice in relation to parental involvement many families might struggle to fully understand due to a language barrier. In some instances English is not spoken at home and it is only the children who can speak English. This can make taking part in school life more challenging for certain families.

**Time Constraints**

For many parents time constraints can be a major issue that effects their involvement in the school. It is important that there is clear communication from the school in relation to what is going on and that will make it easier for parents to be involved.

**Priority Families**

The parents of our priority families sometimes find it difficult to get involved in school life. They are reluctant to call into the school. The HSCL teacher must play a vital role in this regard ensuring that there are many positive interactions with the school.

**Culture**

Many of our families are from a different cultural background that can make getting involved in school initiatives more difficult. The organisation of different parental courses might well be useful in helping to integrate these parents into the school environment

**Data Findings**

* 98% of respondents felt that St Oliver Plunkett’s was a welcoming school
* 66% of those surveyed said there were aware of a HSCL teacher
* 20% had taken part in Parental courses in the school
* Many surveyed were working full-time and this was a barrier to participation.
* Parent Teacher meetings being held face to face were generally well received
* Communication such as Twitter and School Newsletter were well received
* Days such as Sports Days were seen as an ideal opportunity to get involved
* Many parents felt that it was up to parents to involve themselves
* Some parents felt that communication by telephone, while not face to face, was easier
* Respondents said that the HSCL teacher was very welcoming

**Our School & Outside Agencies**

* Local Playgroups; Mother Hubbards in Blackcastle; Le Cheile in Simonstown GAA grounds
* Scoil na n-Óg on Proudstown Road
* Loreto Convent , Mercy Convent , St. Patricks Classic School, Beaufort College , Coláiste na Mí
* Navan Education Centre
* An Taisce (Green flag initiative.)
* Meath county Council Environmental section
* HSE (Yellow flag initiative)
* Health Promoting school initiative.; Zippy’s friends; Mighty Mouth Programme
* School Nurse/Doctor/Occupational Therapist; Speech and Language Therapists, District Nurse, Dentist
* Social Workers
* Psychologist and multi-disciplinary teams.
* Irish Heart Foundation
* Catholic Parish of Navan
* School Chaplain- Fr Noel Weir
* Meath Local sports partnership
* Mayo Education Centre (Active School)
* Garda Síochana; Community Liaison Garda
* Anti-Bullying strategies (Don’t be mean behind your screen)
* Musical facilitators: Recorder and violin with Alun Smyth
* N.E.P.S. Local Ed Psychologist- Claire Phelan
* Resilience Programmes; Friends for life programme ;Fun friends programme.
* School Completion worker Sinead Kearns
* Co-ordinator and key worker- Christina Nestor
* Navan County Library
* Clubs and Societies: Simonstown GAA Club Navan ‘O Mahonys GAA Club; Navan Rugby;
* OMP Soccer Club
* GAA Coaching Officer Gareth BurnsOMP
* Aura swimming and leisure complex
* Cumann Na mBunscol – Willie Lyons
* FAI local soccer facilitator- Richard Smyth
* Oriel Yoga
* Dance troop
* NCSE Local SENO Anita Bray, Regional SENO

**Targets**

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| **What are our specific Attendance targets in the next 3 years?**  **Target 1** | |
| **Focus Area** | **Target 1** |
| One of the initial focus areas we had identified in October as a staff was in relation to the various different courses undertaken by parents through the HSCL teacher Mr McDonagh. We mentioned Gardening Group and the Parents Choir. We also talked about Parental Involvement in the Gaelbhratach Committee. There have been many other courses this year in relation to parents such as Floral arranging and wreath making. | **June 2023**  Increase parental Involvement in courses in the school year by an extra 1%. |
| **June 2024**  Increase parental Involvement in courses in the school year by an extra 1%. |
| **June 2025**  Increase parental Involvement in courses in the school year by an extra 1%. |
| **What are our specific Parental Involvement targets in the next 3 years?**  **Target 2** | |
| **Focus Area** | **Target 2** |
| Another of area of focus identified by our initial staff discussion was in relation to Parent Teacher Meetings. In the discussions of the Parental Involvement team they decided to target participation of Parents in meetings by any means be they in person, by zoom or by phone. | **June 2023**  Attendance by Parents at PT meetings will be above 90% |
| **June 2024**  Attendance by Parents at PT meetings will be above 95% |
| **June 2025**  Attendance by Parents at PT meetings will be 100% |
| **What are our specific targets regarding the involvement of others in the next 3 years?**  **Target 3** | |
| **Focus Area** | **Target 3** |
| The 2nd involves communicating to others the role of HSCL more clearly which appears to be an issue judging by survey. Communication of the role of HSCL on school website, Twitter & Newsletter. Also communication of role of HSCL in initial staff meeting. Awareness of the role of HSCL is key in developing working relationship with parents and other Groups. There would also be a need to invite in outside professionals like perhaps the NEPS psychologist, speech therapists or occupational therapists which would give an opportunity to inform teachers and help them understand the workings of these systems better | **June 2023**  75% of respondents be aware of the role of HSCL |
| **June 2024**  80% of respondents be aware of the role of HSCL |
| **June 2025**  More than 90% of our absences unexplained |

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| **What needs to be put in place to achieve those targets and by whom?** | |
| **Initiative** | **Led by** |
| Increase the amount of Parental Courses that we have on offer. Perhaps this will involve increased interaction with the parents Association to reflect the courses that are necessary or sought after. | HSCL  Principal |
| HSCL attends Parents Association meeting | HSCL |
| Invitation to parents to partake in committees surrounding whole school initiatives such as Gaelbhratach and Active Schools Flag | HSCL  Principal  Relevant Teachers |
| Accurate recording of attendance for Parent Teacher Meetings using the Aladdin system. Parent teacher meetings should be face to face, via zoom or by telephone. | Class Teachers  Principal |
| Construct a Powerpoint display clearly detailing the role of HSCL to be delivered at first staff meeting of the year, first Parents Association meeting of the year and Junior Infant Induction day | HSCL  Principal |
| A talk by outside agents such as Speech Therapists, Occupational therapists, psychologists clearly explaining their role and its benefits in an educational setting as part of Croke Park Hour professional Development | Whole Staff  Board of Management |
| Parental Involvement in the organisation of Grandparents Day, Gaelbhratach celebrations, Musicals, Christmas Card initiatives etc | Parents  Principal  Teachers |
| Interacting with local groups such as Navan O’ Mahonys, Simonstown, OMP, Parkvilla, Impulse gymnastics throughout Active Schools Week | Principal  Relevant Post Holder  Teachers |
| Invitation to different outside groups to come into the school and work with the children throughout the year in areas of Sport, Science, Art & Drama | Principal  Relevant Post Holder  Teachers |

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| **Where do the following areas play a role in the plan?** | | |
| **Continued Professional Development**  Talks provided by NEPS Psychologist, speech therapists & occupational therapists in order to give a greater understanding of their role and function in the school  Talk from the HSCL teacher around their role identifying areas that they work in and affect  Updated training in Children First TUSLA training programme  PDST DEIS training course | **Well-being**  Sports activities within the school such as GAA, Soccer, Athletics, Rounders, Rugby & Tennis  Extra-Curricular activities in the school such as Comhairle na n-Óg, Chess Club, Knitting Club, Science Club, & Library Committee that can sometimes involve parents  Parental Courses facilitated by the HSCL throughout the year  Important Community days such as Grandparents Day  Play Therapy provided for children by the school  Initiatives such as Active Schools Week, Friendship week etc which involve outside organisations | **Leadership**  Attendance Committee in dealing with various attendance issues that arise from week to week  Organisation of parents courses, Grandparents Day,etc  Organisation of events such as Active Schools Week & Friendship week  Developing on online method to communicate with parents through Twitter, website and newsletter and improve their participation as a result  Powerpoint display conducted by the HSCL explaining clearly their role and function at Infants Induction Day, Staff meeting and Parents Association meeting |