**DEIS Plan 2023-2026**

**Transition Strategy for St Oliver Plunkett N.S. Navan**

**Aims**

* Maintain the participation of those parents already involved in the school to ensure they are aware of all matters pertaining to Transition
* Recruit parents of priority families to partake in courses thus ensuring relationships are built up that make transition easier.
* Monitor the application process for Secondary schools
* Ensure parents have a sought admission in more than one secondary school
* 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
* Establish relationship with playschools by dropping in flyers at enrolment time
* Clearly communicate the identity and role of our HSCL teacher Mr Anthony McDonagh
* HSCL will liaise with Secondary schools and parents in relation to the transition to secondary school and transition from playschool
* Ensure that the school has procedures in place to ensure smooth transition to secondary and from playschool
* 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 transition in the school.
* Junior Infant Induction Day in May each year
* School Transition programme carried out with 6th class by School Completion Worker

**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 transition
* HSCL teacher will liaise with playschools & Secondary Schools
* HSCL teacher will liaise with HSCL teachers in other Schools in relation to transition
* 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 in order to build up relationships in relation to matters such as Transition
* Develop a close working relationship with local creches and playschools
* Conduct a Transition programme each Spring for children in 6th class
* Transmit information for online zoom training in relation to transition to secondary school conducted by the National Parents Council
* Invite children from last years’ 6th class to return in the final term to speak to 6th class children around Transition to Secondary
* Treat all parents/guardians with respect
* Facilitate transitioning from special class to mainstream as much as possible

**Parents/Guardians**

* Inform themselves on the day to day events in the school by reading emails, the school website and school newsletters
* Ensure they have enrolled their children in secondary school and have given themselves the option of more than one
* Attend Parent Teacher meetings in November to ensure they keep up to date on child’s progress
* Attend school events such as on-line zoom training for transition and Junior Infant Induction Day
* Visit the school prior to their child enrolling availing of a tour of the school
* Visit the school website familiarising themselves with school policies
* Attend secondary school open nights
* Encourage the development of a positive attitude towards the school with their children
* Treat school teachers & staff with respect

**Pupils**

* Pupils should inform parents of different activities in the school in relation to transition to Secondary
* Pupils should deliver home different communications from the school in relation to enrolment, open nights, etc
* Pupils should attend open nights with parents if possible and identify the aspects of each school that appeal to them

**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, particularly around transitioning to Secondary School
* 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. This means that if there are any queries regarding transitioning there is a visible person to go to in the mornings
* The HSCL teacher is very active around the area of enrolment forms for Secondary and ensuring that every child gets a place in Secondary school.
* 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. The stronger the sense of belonging to the school, the more barriers to school are broken down in the minds of some parents. This is good for Transition.

**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. All of this gives the school the ability to transmit information around Transitions quickly and effectively. Parents are very clear on dates for enrolment and open nights.

**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. All information surrounding transitions can be easily transmitted to parents at these meetings.

**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. If this language barrier is somewhat removed it makes settling in a new school setting a lot easier. Similarly our EAL teacher makes it easier for children, who are new to our school with little English, to settle in St Oliver’s.

**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 classes performing at Assembly receive a text prior to assembly inviting their attendance. Junior Assembly is excellent at helping children to settle in St Oliver’s and communicate the rules in a relaxed atmosphere. Senior Assembly helps greatly to communicate information to the older children around their move to Secondary school

**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. It also develops the opportunity for children to partake in local sporting organisations. This allows children to make friends across schools, thus making the move to a Secondary school far easer.

**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. In this regard we make it a high priority to help infants to settle in the school. We also consider it important to facilitate smooth transition to our neighbouring Secondary Schools also. With our positive environment it will encourage integration of children in our Special class into mainstream

**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. This means that information surrounding transition and settling infants flows smoothly between school and parents.

**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.

**Relations with Local playschools**

We have built up a great network of contacts in our local community amongst playschools and creches. Le Chéile, Scoil na n-Óg, The Children’s House & Scallywags are all examples of local playschools who we work with. We will drop in leaflets for admissions and our HSCL teacher will visit these schools to facilitate transition for our students

**School Transition Program**

Our School Completion worker conducts a transition program for our 6th class students in Spring-time. This allows them to familiarise themselves with features relating to their new Secondary schools. It also reduces a degree of anxiety related to the move. It provides the children with timetables, Principal names, maps and general information.

**SET Team**

Our SET team in St Oliver’s work hard to ensure that all necessary information is kept up to date relating to children that they work with. Reports & Assessments are passed on to parents to take to their child’s new secondary school.

**Blazing Saddles Programme**

This is a program offered in the school through Navan School Completion that provides a bike to children in 6th class along with training to ensure they can more easily commute to school each morning from home.

**Challenges for the school in relation to Transition**

**COVID 19**

The pandemic has had a big effect on children and has increased anxiety levels around a whole range of topics. This is the case for something like Transition where it can be a difficult milestone for some children. COVID has exacerbated these problems

**Language barrier**

When trying to implement strategies or communicate practice in relation to transition 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 and can certainly make an unknown step to a new school more difficult.

**Lack of Support**

Some children in our school struggle to get the necessary support. This can be a very important factor in Transition. Open nights can be missed, enrolment deadlines can be forgotten and in some cases children may not have applied for a place at all. It is the role of the Principal, Class teacher, HSCL teacher & NSC Worker to constantly communicate messages surrounding transition.

**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
* 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
* Respondents said that the HSCL teacher was very welcoming
* Suggested that 6th class children from last year be invited back to speak to transitioning class
* Transition in St Oliver’s was found to be good by most surveyed although many had not yet had a child in 6th
* A visit from Local Secondary Schools would be useful
* Role play scenarios in different Secondary School situations was also suggested

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| **Who are the children in our school at risk of educational disadvantage moving from one school setting to another** | |
| **What evidence sources have we to help us identify pupils most at risk** | HSCL Teacher  School Completion Officer  Attendance Records  Psychological Reports  School Reports  Class Teachers |

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| **Why are these children most at risk and how do we ensure we facilitate their progression from one school setting to another?** | |
| **What are the factors that make progressing from one school setting to another difficult for our most at risk students?** | Lack of Parental Involvement  Lack of Parental Support  Poor Communication  Language Barrier |
| **How could we make progression from one school setting to another easier for these students?** | Good Communication around deadlines  HSCL Teacher & School Completion Officer help with applications  Class Teachers checking all children have applied for a school  Transition Programme in 6th Class  Junior Infant Induction Day  Positive Inclusive environment for children in special class |

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| **Why are these children most at risk and how do we ensure we facilitate their continued involvement in school life?** | |
| **When we examine our at risk students moving from one school setting to another what areas should we focus on?** | Attendance  Reports  Punctuality |
| **What other school factors might influence this transition such as classroom/school climate, student-teacher relationships, teacher expectations, school organisation, etc** | Encourage parents to attend open nights  Clear communication from the school  Translated leaflets for non-English speakers around transition  Information regarding entrance exams  Close communication between class teacher HSCL teacher and School Completion Officer |

**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 first areas we feel might be focused on is the involvement of past pupils. We have children in all the secondary schools in the local area and 6th class children will be particularly interested in what they have to say around transition | **June 2023**  We will facilitate a visit from past students from the different schools to visit current 6th class students on a particular morning |
| **June 2024**  Maintain each year |
| **June 2025**  Maintain each year |
| **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 Transition team was how we might make transition to secondary school smoother. What resources and aids could we put in place to this end? | **June 2023**  Ensure Transition program is carried out face to face with all 6th class children. |
| **June 2024**  Teachers introduce a variety of online resources throughout the school year to help a smooth transition to Secondary. The transition team will work on these resources |
| **June 2025**  Give subject specific information to students about subjects they are not familiar with such as Technical Graphics & Home Economics |
| **What are our specific targets regarding the involvement of others in the next 3 years?**  **Target 3** | |
| **Focus Area** | **Target 3** |
| This target is more focused on helping parents with the transition of their children | **June 2023**  Offer information on opening nights and entrance exams for all parents and circulate a timetable in the school newsletter as soon as possible. |
| **June 2024**  Encourage participation of 5th & 6th class parents in online courses that will help with the transition such as that run by the Parents Council of Ireland |
| **June 2025**  In-person courses for parents in relation to transition from playschool to primary and primary to secondary |

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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 in relation to Transition to Secondary School. The National Parents Council online course is a good example. | HSCL  Principal |
| HSCL to host a Transition Coffee morning unveiling timetables for applications, open nights etc. Also an opportunity to discuss with Parents some of their fears around the move. | HSCL  School Completion Officer |
| A member of the ISLM team who has responsibility for Transition and monitoring the Transition Plan | ISLM Team |
| Annual Junior Infant Induction afternoon organised whereby prospective parents have an opportunity to meet teachers, familiarise themselves with policy, see the school and discuss the ethos | Principal  Junior Infant Teachers  Relevant post-holder |
| 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 |
| Clear communication with prospective Infants parents in the 6 months leading up to their children beginning with emails, newsletters and JI Induction day | Principal  Deputy Principal  Relevant post-holder |
| Transition Programme conducted with 6th class students in the Spring | School Completion Officer  HSCL Teacher  Relevant post-holder |
| Timetable provided with important dates such as applications, open nights, entrance tests etc | Principal  Relevant post-holder |
| Invitation to different outside Secondary Principals/Deputy Principals to come into the school and talk with the children regarding the move to Secondary | Principal  Teachers |
| Invitation to last years’ 6th class children to return and share their experiences of the opening months of Secondary school | Principal  Class Teacher  Relevant post-holder |
| Necessary training in the area of Autism for the whole school in order to facilitate greater integration of children in our special class | Principal |
| Translate Information note regarding transition and communicate more clearly with non-English speaking parents | School Completion officer |

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| **Where do the following areas play a role in the plan?** | | |
| **Continued Professional Development**  Talks provided by NCSE in relation to Special class  Online courses for teachers and parents regarding the Transition to Secondary school  Online Summer courses that develop further knowledge in early childhood education and autism  Training for teachers in resilience programmes such as Friends for Life and Zippy’s Friends  PDST DEIS training course | **Well-being**  Sports activities such as GAA, Soccer, Athletics, Rounders, Rugby & Tennis that bring our students into contact with neighbouring schools that will make transitioning easier  Extra-Curricular activities in the school such as Comhairle na n-Óg, Chess Club, Knitting Club, Science Club, & Library Committee that can allow children to build relationships with children in other 6th classes who may be going to their Secondary schools  Parental Courses facilitated by the HSCL throughout the year  Play Therapy provided for children by the school which could prove beneficial in instances where there are anxieties.  Initiatives such as Active Schools Week, Friendship week etc which allow for the integration of students in the special classes | **Leadership**  Organisation of Junior Infant Induction Day, First Year visit, Autism CPD, etc  Organisation of events such as Active Schools Week & Friendship week  Developing on online method to communicate with parents through Twitter, website and newsletter that allows for clear and concise messaging around Transition  Powerpoint display conducted by the HSCL explaining clearly their role and function at Infants Induction Day  Gathering Resources to make available to parents in relation to Transition  Post-holder for Transition monitoring the progress of the DEIS plan for transition  Conducting the Transition Programme with our 6th class students |