

**St. John's Primary School  
Bligh's Lane  
Derry**

**TRANSITION POLICY**

**2021**



**“Learning Together Growing Together”**

## **Mission Statement**

At St. John's Primary School, we provide a happy, safe, caring and stimulating learning environment. In line with our Catholic ethos our culture of inclusion, respect and social justice allows each individual to develop their unique talents and gifts to the best of their ability. We value our parents / carers as first educators and continue to work with them and local community partners as we nurture each child's social, emotional, intellectual and spiritual well-being, thereby enabling our school community to 'Learn Together' and 'Grow Together'.

## **Rationale**

At St. John's Primary School we feel it is important to create a whole school approach of which staff, children, parents, governors and other agencies have a clear understanding. This policy is a formal statement of intent and details how we meet the legal requirements of NI Curriculum, the Learn to Learn Strategy.

## **Aims**

We want our children to experience a smooth educational and emotional transition from one phase to the next. This will ensure that children make the best all round progress.

## **Definition**

In this policy, 'transition' describes the movement that takes place from one year to the next, and from one phase of education to the next.

## **Principles that Underpin the Policy**

The principles that underpin our transition policy are:

- Effective transition takes time, and is a process rather than an event
- Parents and carers need to feel well informed about and comfortable with all transitions in their child's life and need to be involved on an equal basis
- Transition is about the setting fitting the child, not the child fitting the setting
- Transitions are thought about and planned in advance
- Approaches to teaching and learning should be harmonised at the point of transition
- Styles of teaching and learning should meet the individual needs of children
- Planning should be based upon assessment information from the previous school/class/Key Stage (KS)
- There should be a professional regard for the information from the previous school/class/KS
- Children's emotional welfare, wellbeing and involvement should be assessed before and after transition
- Children should enjoy the transition process
- The transition process should motivate and challenge children
- For children with additional needs, additional strategies and an individualised visit with photo books or social stories will be provided, so that transitions are personalised to promote wellbeing
- Staff allocation for a period prior to, during and after initial transition should be made to maximise the comfort and welfare of the children.

## **Initial Preparations**

At St. John's P.S. transition receives careful thought and thorough planning. All staff are aware of the systems that are currently in place and evaluate the effectiveness of procedures on an annual basis.

- Year 1 teachers contact the staff of the Feeder Nursery/Playgroups, to request time to observe children in their pre-school environment
- Meetings are scheduled between Nursery/Playgroup and Year 1 teachers and the SENCo to discuss on going assessment and Profile Information in Term 3
- Nurseries/Playgroups and Parents are invited to bring the children to visit St. John's P.S. a minimum of twice per year in May and June
- At present children from our main feeder nursery visit in December to watch the Foundation Stage Nativity Play
- A Santa Grotto visit is scheduled for Sure Start and Bligh's Lane Nursery
- All prospective children are invited to a Musical Pathways to Learning session annually in May to meet with their Year 1 teacher
- All Nursery/Playgroup children and their parents are invited to meet the Year 1 teacher/support staff and explore the Year One environment at 'Stay and Play' sessions in May/June
- Parents attend an Induction Meeting with the Principal and staff in June. Induction packs are issued at this meeting
- Teachers meet parents at Prompt Meetings in September to discuss individual children after the settling in period. Any worries or concerns are passed on to Pastoral lead and a one-to-one meeting is scheduled with parents to share any additional information on health and wellbeing
- Parent emails and data capture forms are signed so that photographs permission is already in place for SEESAW communication is up and running on the child's first day
- Parents are invited into school in September for Curriculum Induction Programmes and Jolly Phonics workshops.

## **Creating an Appropriate Environment**

- All staff have received training on how to provide a high-quality learning environment
- Year 1 teaching staff have visited Nursery/Playgroup settings to see how areas of provision provide support and challenge the children's current learning so that they can ensure future progress in the way they plan and organise their provision
- The areas of provision in Year 1 are planned with appropriate learning intentions, challenge and teacher focussed tasks
- The learning environment in the Year 1 classrooms, outside classrooms and shared area is organised with areas of continuous provision. These include a sand area; reading area; writing area; painting area; creative area; small world area; role-play area; ICT area; and construction area. Continuous provision plans in Year 1 address the key skills/objectives and statutory curriculum areas
- All Year 1 teachers meet weekly to plan according to the children's needs and interests to ensure continuity and progression for play based learning experiences
- There continues to be opportunities for active, child-initiated independent learning through structured and unstructured play. The amount of time that children in Year 1 spend sitting still and listening is gradually increased so that the children remain motivated, enthused and eager learners
- All teachers complete a Barriers to Learning proforma which provides a holistic picture of each class

- Nursery/Playgroup teachers highlight those children who may need a modified curriculum
- Nursery/Playgroup and Year 1 teachers meet in the latter part of the summer term to discuss and agree curriculum and environment for the first month in Year 1.

### **Equal Opportunities and Inclusion**

In line with our *Equal Opportunities and Inclusion Policies* we are committed to providing a teaching environment conducive to children reaching their full potential. Each child is valued, respected and challenged regardless of race, gender, religion, social background, culture and diversity.

The children and parents are actively involved in the process. Their perceptions about transition are explored and valued and contribute to the school's self-evaluation process.

Appropriate assistance is provided in a variety of ways including: -

- A range of learning styles
- Using children's ideas and motivations as a starting point for learning
- Adjusting the conceptual demand of the task as appropriate for the child.

The Foundation Stage (FS) staff work as a team consisting of Teachers and Learning Support Assistants (LSAs). In order to develop a sense of trust and enhance feelings of security for all children, a Year 1 LSA accompanies classes through to Year 2. For the less confident there is always a familiar face to go to for support. All staff are involved in assessments and follow the progress of the children from entry into Year 1 to the completion of FS. Assessment Notebooks are available for all appropriate staff to make an entry into as a result of a timetabled or individual observation or formative and summative assessments.

### **Communication**

Communication with parents has always been at the forefront of FS practice. From the 'Stay and Play' meetings and Induction Meeting before the children formally begin Year 1 to the 'Prompt Meeting' report in September, the Parent Teacher report in November and, finally, to the in-depth report at the end of Year 1, parents are kept involved and updated on their child's progress. Presentations throughout Year 1 include demonstrations on Literacy and Numeracy.

Parents receive a Prospectus, full copies of the Child Protection Policy, Complaints Policy and School Procedures and Safeguarding Information at the Induction Meeting.

A Pastoral Information Booklet is given to all parents during the first week of the Autumn Term. This booklet contains abridged policies, permission slips, contracts, expectations and routines.

### **Transition from Year 1 to Year 2**

- Opportunity is provided for all children to visit the Year 2 classrooms and playground area during a whole-school class changeover annually in June. This visit helps the children to become familiar with the new classroom, routines and staff
- Staff share and analyse their new class's assessment information and general information with the previous year's teacher in June so that plans can be made for those children who need greater support with transition. Pastoral information is also passed on at these meetings. This provides the starting point for teaching and learning in September, ensuring that children experience activities appropriate to

- their needs and stage of development. Teachers confer again in September to ensure that the transition has been effective
- During the Autumn Term there are ‘Prompt Meetings’ for all parents. This enables parents to meet teachers, ask any questions, and generally ensure they are prepared to support their child in the move to a new year group. There is also an opportunity for parents to see their child’s new classroom
- Summative Folders are passed on to the oncoming class teachers in June to be added to until the individual child leaves in Year 7
- A Pastoral Information Booklet is issued to all parents during the first week of the Autumn Term. This booklet contains abridged policies, permission slips, contracts, expectations and routines
- A monthly curriculum newsletter is given to parents to inform them of topics etc. relevant information and ways in which they can help their child.

### **Transition from Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2**

- Opportunity is provided for all children to visit their new classrooms and playground areas during a whole-school class changeover in the summer term. This visit helps the children to become familiar with new routines and new staff
- During the Autumn Term there are ‘Prompt Meetings’ for all parents. This enables parents to meet teachers, ask questions, and generally ensure they are prepared to support their child in the move to a new year group. There is also an opportunity for parents to see their child’s new classroom
- Staff share and analyse their new class’s assessment information and general information with the previous year’s teacher annually in June so that plans can be made for those children who need greater support with transition. This provides the starting point for teaching and learning in September, ensuring that children experience activities appropriate to their needs and stage of development. Teachers confer again in September to ensure that the transition has been effective. Pastoral information is also passed on at these meetings.
- Summative Folders are passed on to the oncoming class teachers in June to be added to until the individual child leaves in Year 7
- An in-depth study of each class using the Barriers to Learning Profile takes place in October with a review in January to ensure remediation and any SEND or behavioural needs are identified
- A Pastoral Information Booklet is issued to all parents during the first week of the Autumn Term. This booklet contains abridged policies, permission slips, contracts, expectations and routines
- Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 children attend class assemblies together.

### **Transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3**

- During the Spring Term, the Year 7 children have an opportunity to visit their chosen secondary school in order to meet new teachers, sample new routines, become familiar with a new school building and experience typical lessons
- Year 8 Co-ordinators visit St. John’s Primary School to talk to the children about moving to secondary school and answer any questions the children may have in June
- Year 7 teachers complete Transition Profiles following the May Summative Assessments and forward these to the Year 8 liaison teacher. Year 7 teachers then have one-to-one sessions with the Year 8 teachers in order to pass on this information in June

- In June the Year 7 children have a one day retreat in order to prepare spiritually for the transition. They also participate in the Big Fish, Little Fish Transition Programme with a trained counsellor
- Information booklets from secondary schools are issued to children with information about their new secondary school
- North West Youth Service provide Mindfulness Packs from past pupils, a Q and A with past children occurs in November of Year 7
- The Designated Teachers for Child Protection in both settings meet to share relevant information in June.

### **Partnership with Parents**

At St. John's P.S. we encourage parents to be involved by: -

- Inviting parents into school to discuss the well-being and progress of their child
- Inviting parents to curriculum evenings
- Take 5 Mental Health Programme for parents which runs weekly for 6 weeks
- OLT provide 'Stay and Play' sessions for early years and family cooking projects
- Creggan Country Park provide outdoor nature learning experiences for Y1-Y7
- The School App is available to all parents
- Attendance is tracked and calls, letters given early on in Y1 to ensure a good pattern of attendance continues throughout the child's time at St. John's P.S.
- Monthly electronic newsletters/communicating
- Parent communication through SEESAW App
- Learning Together Programme
- Social media posts provide signposts to NI parenting workshops, play based learning ideas and guidance on wellbeing
- Jolly Phonics workshops are held for Y1 parents
- RSE presentations are held for all year groups to introduce "In the Beginning" for year groups from Y2-Y7
- Children who start school mid-year have a tour of the school and are given a "Starting School" pack. The parent has the opportunity to speak to the Pastoral lead to ensure smooth transitions for the child.

### **Continuing Professional Development**

- Year 1 teachers have received training in Elklan and Wellcomm. They use their experience and skill to baseline children on entry in association with BPVS
- FS teachers are confident in making assessments through the observation of children
- Formative and Summative Files for all year groups are transferred at the Transition Meetings in June
- Teachers plan collaboratively. Subject Co-ordinators monitor the planning of teaching and learning for continuity and progression
- A culture of professional reflection is encouraged and evidenced in planner evaluations
- Planner evaluations are monitored twice per year.
- ASTAC and Barriers to Learning meetings ensure that all class teachers take ownership of challenges that may present for some children

- A programme of CPD is delivered through Staff Development Days and Thursday INSET sessions
- All teachers participate in PRSD which is closely related to the School Development Plan
- All staff contribute towards audits and plan the new School Development Plan
- All school staff are trained in Child Protection procedures annually
- All teachers participate in curriculum development through engagement in panel meetings
- All teachers are trained in the CALM plan, Hope in the Work place, ACES, Attachment and Trauma, Care in Education, PATHS and RSE.

### **Policy Review**

This policy has been determined by the Board of Governors, which said body may approve revisions as necessary and appropriate.

This policy will be reviewed three years from Board of Governors' Ratification.

**Reviewed by staff:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Kathleen McCallion**  
(Chairperson of the Board of Governors)

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

(Ratified at Board of Governors' Meeting)