

St. Joseph's N.S., Leitrim Village, Roll No: 01125B

Policy on Transition to Second Level

1. Introduction

This is a whole school policy to assist children in their transition to second level education. This policy was formulated between September and December 2012 at various staff meetings during this time. All staff were involved in the process. This policy was reviewed between September and December 2016 and again between September and December 2018.

2. Rationale

This policy is prioritised by staff in order to assist all pupils to have a smooth transfer to second level. Siobhán McElgunn, the current 6th class teacher, will deliver the programme.

3. Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School

Children are the messengers we send forward to a future we may not see. St. Joseph's N.S. is a co-educational, Catholic, primary school which strives to provide a well ordered, caring, happy and secure atmosphere where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of the pupil are identified and addressed. Our school cherishes all pupils equally and aids them in achieving their true potential in all situations and scenarios. Thus, careful preparation is needed to help them to adjust to their new setting, variety and selection of subjects and numerous teaching staff in their new schools. The transition from primary to post-primary can be a stressful event for all students and their parents so the primary school and the staff concerned need to establish effective communication, consultation and consolidation between all parties involved.

4. Aims

To prepare the sixth class pupils for the move to second level education in a practical way, to ease any worries and provide extra support for pupils with special needs who may find this move more difficult.

5. Guidelines: Content of the Transition Programme

The Transition programme is delivered over a six-week period in weekly half hour slots. The programme content is outlined below. The subject areas may vary depending on the needs of the children concerned.

Week 1

Meeting New Challenges

- (a) Change and Live!
- (b) Being Prepared

The purpose of this lesson is to help children to realise that change is a necessary part of living and to get them to explore the principal physical, social and emotional changes that take place in a lifetime. It also identifies the transition to second level school as a big change which is about to take place in a person's life and it affords the children an opportunity to share possible strategies to assist management of this change.

Week 2

Time Management

- (a) Know your School
- (b) Focus on Timetables

The purpose of this lesson is to provide an opportunity to study second-level schools as an organisation, identify school personnel and their roles and identify the school's resources. Children will be given a copy of the school's layout and a sample timetable. They will also be familiar with subject names, their abbreviations, where each subject is taught (classrooms) and how to follow an actual timetable from the secondary school. Copies of above are provided by local secondary schools.

Week 3

Making Friends

- (a) Friendships
- (b) Peer Pressure

The purpose of this lesson is to help children to reflect on their friendships and realise that friends enhance the quality of life. It also allows the children an opportunity to discuss situations where there may be conflict between what the child wants to do and what his/her friends wish him/her to do. It also allows the children an opportunity to reflect on how they reacted in a "peer pressure" situation.

Week 4

Rules and Choices

- (a) Reasoning behind Rules
- (b) Consequences of our Choices

The purpose of this lesson is to help children to explore the necessity for rules and apply reasoning behind a set of rules that children are already familiar with. Children will be given copies of rules currently enforced/in use in the local secondary schools to study and to discuss with their parents/guardians. The children will explore the consequences of breaking rules.

Week 5

Self-Esteem

- (a) Personal Profile
- (b) Pride in our School

The purpose of this lesson is to help children to create a positive self-image and appreciate their own uniqueness. It will also help children to focus on positive aspects of their school and foster a pride in their school.

Week 6

The final week will consist of the following activities – "Helping Hand" activity, "Fan of Support" activity and the "Moving On Up" board game. Children will be given actual accounts from current first years and these will be read and discussed.

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The purpose of this lesson is to tie in all the previous lessons and empower the students and advise them about other avenues of support available to them. Their own fears and worries will also be raised and addressed in the other students' accounts of their first few months in secondary school.

Depending on the needs of the cohort of students in sixth class each year, these sessions may need to be extended to an eight week block of time. This can be decided upon each January.

Throughout their time in St. Joseph's NS, the following activities will be carried out with all pupils to gradually prepare them for any transitions:

- The students will be taught how to read school timetables and will be given samples.
- The class will be given different due dates for certain pieces of homework in order to prepare them for a more complex timetable, as is the current practice.
- Colour coding of copies and books will be carried out when necessary to develop better organisational skills among students.
- Key words for specific subjects may be taught through the oral language strand of the English curriculum.
- This Transition Programme can be taught / reinforced into the SPHE programme.
- Pupils will record homework in a journal at the end of lessons as is the current practice as opposed to the end of each day.

Each sixth class pupil will be given a copies of the layout of local secondary schools and will be strongly encouraged to attend the annual open evenings in these schools. These can be used to familiarise pupils with the school of their choice prior to entry. Key personnel in the post-primary schools will be identified and their respective roles will be explained to the pupils. Parents/guardians will also be encouraged and assisted to inform the post-primary school of their choice as soon as possible if their child has a Special Educational Need.

Management and Teaching

Personnel from the local secondary school visit 6th class on an annual basis with a view to outlining and providing information on what their respective schools have to offer. Such visits are important, particularly the engagement with pupils. Each pupil receives a School Prospectus to share with their parents/guardians. In order to celebrate their time in St. Joseph's NS and set them off on the next step in their educational journey, a special "Graduation Ceremony" takes place annually specifically for sixth class pupils and their parents. The celebration includes spiritual, academic, musical and visual elements and is student led throughout. Pupils and their parents/guardians are then invited to some light refreshments as a gesture of support from the school and to acknowledge that they are now on the verge of young adulthood.

6. Success Criteria

A six week block of time will be chosen by the class teacher that accommodates all parties concerned. It will be delivered in half hour slots once per week for six weeks. The students' worries and concerns should be addressed and alleviated as the programme progresses.

The effectiveness and success of the policy will be measured in a number of ways: -

- Feedback from students and their parents/guardians.
- Teacher designed tasks and tests
- Completion of questionnaires
- Level of participation by students in various lessons.
- Feedback from second level schools
- Review of content delivered and adjusted as necessary

7. Roles and Responsibility

The policy will be supported by all staff, pupils and their parents/guardians. The planned content will be implemented by Siobhán McElgunn, current sixth class teacher. This may change on a yearly basis.

The policy and planned programme of work will be monitored by the sixth class teacher and the School Principal. The planned programme of work will be presented to all those concerned in advance of its delivery to the students.

8. Implementation and Review

The Policy will be implemented in full, once ratified by the Board of Management. The Transition Programme will provisionally begin in March 2019 as the six-week block is usually delivered prior to the students' enrolment nights in the various secondary schools.

All teaching staff will be involved in the review process every two years or earlier if the need arises. The staff member who delivers the Transition Programme to the sixth class pupils will be responsible for amending this policy document. This policy will be reviewed again in November/ December 2020.

9. Ratification and Communication

This Policy will be presented to the Board of Management in November 2018 for discussion with a view to ratification. Once ratified all teachers will have a copy of this Policy and any parent/guardian who wishes to view this copy will be facilitated.

This policy was last ratified by the BOM on Wednesday 28th November 2018.