

# St. Joseph's Boys' School



## 'Achievement for All'

### Policy on Primary Secondary Links

*I can do all things through him who strengthens me.*

Philippians 4:13

Agreed SMT *MMCC*

Date: 19/01/2021

Principal

Agreed BOG *Sade M. O'Keefe*

Date: 28/02/2021

Chairperson

Review Date:

**February 2023**

This policy outlines the strategies used to help with the transition of students from primary school to secondary school. It also details strategies used in liaison with feeder primary schools in co-ordinating activities for students in Primary 6 and 7.

This policy will be implemented in the following ways:

- 1.0 The pupil transition programme
- 2.0 Development, planning and implementation of cross-pharse curricular Link
- 3.0 Due to on-going Global Pandemic an addendum

## **1.0 - The Pupil Transition Programme**

The aim of the pupil transition programme is to assist the pupils in their emotional, social and academic adjustments to St. Joseph's. This will be achieved by:

- 1.1 Parental involvement
- 1.2 Pupil familiarisation
- 1.3 On-going programme for transition
- 1.4 Teacher liaison.

### **1.1 Parental Involvement**

Strong school-home links are continuously encouraged and developed at St. Joseph's. In regard to prospective pupils parental involvement is encouraged in the following ways:

- St. Joseph's prospectus is issued to all primary seven boys through the feeder primary schools. It is also available on St. Joseph's school website, social media site and on open night.
- Open night consists of:
  - A talk by the principal on the values and organisation of the school.
  - A question and answer session.
  - A tour of the school led by present year 8 pupils and senior prefects.
  - Quiz for Primary 7's to participate and answer questions around the school and receive prizes.
  - Parents who are unable to attend the scheduled open night may make an appointment to visit the school at a mutually convenient time.
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- Verification procedures will begin after an offer of a place at the school has been issued.
- Parents will also be issued with an information leaflet outlining the pupil induction programme and other useful information.
- Parents of year 8 pupils will be invited to a year 8 Mass and Information night in September of year of transfer, where the importance of school-home links and the school app will be emphasised.

## 1.2 Pupil Familiarisation

Prospective pupils are helped to familiarise themselves with St. Joseph's in the following ways:

- Pupils will be invited to St. Joseph's for various activities between P5 and P7 where they will meet numerous members of St. Joseph's staff.
- The primary-secondary links co-ordinator will visit all feeder primary schools in January of year of transfer. A short presentation and video will be given about St. Joseph's and what the school has to offer. P7 pupils will also have the opportunity to ask any questions or queries regarding St Joseph's. Interactive game will also be played to encourage students to remember information regarding the school.
- P7 pupils and their parents have an opportunity to attend the St. Joseph's Open Night in January.
- An induction day is held in June of year of transfer where P7 pupils will spend the day in St. Joseph's. Again pupils will have the opportunity to see around the school, meet members of staff and future class mates. Relevant assessments will also take place on this day.
- The liaison teacher will visit all feeder primary schools alongside Learning Support Manager where needed, in June of year of transfer to allow all necessary information on pupils to be transferred to St. Joseph's.
- All information gathered will be used to place each pupil in the form class which best suits their individual needs.
- Pupils are invited to attend our summer school during the first week of the holidays. This is staffed by our own teachers and classroom assistants.
- Pupils will receive a welcoming pack including a survival kit, stationery, water bottle, school prayer and student handbook which provides all necessary information for entry in September; this is also available on our school website.

- In September a year 8 Mass and parent information night will take place. Parents can meet with form teachers, head of year and senior members of staff. Any initial problems or issues can be identified.

### **1.3 On-going Programme for Transition**

The following factors are taken into consideration to reduce any unnecessary stress or anxiety which may be experienced by the pupils during their transition period from primary school to secondary.

- Commencement at St. Joseph's will begin with an induction day in September and a phased start to the new school time-table.
- Pupils will be arranged into form classes and assigned a form teacher. Pupil will have registration five mornings a week with their form teacher and also lunch registration along with one lesson a week for form period. This will help build relationships between pupil and form teacher and give the form teacher an opportunity to detect if any of the pupils are showing signs of stress or anxiety.
- The new-year 8 pupils will also be assigned a designated Head of Year.
- Our Head of Junior School will also be available to oversee the transition.
- Form teachers are also allocated time to give individual attention to pupils or to meet with parents (by appointment) if necessary.
- Each form class will be assigned a number of trained sixth form mentors which will accompany pupils from class to class over the initial transition period and will always be available as an additional point of contact for the year 8 pupils.
- Every pupil in year 8 will also be paired with a sixth form student as part of our 'Sixth Form Friend' programme.
- The primary-secondary links co-ordinator will be available by appointment if any of the year 8 pupils wishes to talk over any problems they may be having.
- Our departmental transition strategy involves each department being represented with exercise books, door signs, time-table and school map. This will help pupils in their organisation for school and their familiarity with St. Joseph's.
- All year 8 pupils are given early access to the canteen for the first number of weeks in order to familiarise themselves with the lunchtime procedures.
- Primary schools are encouraged to take an interest in the development of their past pupils and can have access to this information. At the same time pupils are encouraged to keep in contact with their former primary

school and will send letters to them at the end of the first term through our English department.

- St. Joseph's has a whole school transition strategy which includes outside agencies such as, Bogside Brandywell Health Forum and Youth First.
- All year 8 pupils are encouraged to join at least one of St. Joseph's many extra-curricular activities such as the school football team or one of our in school clubs such as the chemistry club, film club or lunch bunch club.
- Lunchtime clubs available for those students who need support or guidance; lunch bunch club, Irish club, Library club.
- All information gathered on our incoming year 8 pupils is collated and used to assign form class. This information is continuously added to and reviewed. It is made available to all staff on the staff start up days and via shared area.
- Our transition programme is continuously monitored and evaluated and updated as needed.

#### **1.4 Teacher Liaison**

In order to establish good communications between St. Joseph's and our feeder primary schools a teacher is appointed to liaise between the two. This teacher is also responsible for the following:

- Organisation of St. Joseph's activities for P5-P7 pupils and liaising with staff in St Joseph's.
- Visit all feeder primary schools (P7 pupils) in January of year of transfer.
- Organisation of P7 induction days in June of year of transfer.
- Available as an additional point of contact for year 8 pupils and parents and to assist year 8 form teachers.
- Member of the BOG sub-committee for admittance.
- Organisation of year 8 form class arrangement based on data gathered from primary schools and base line testing carried out on the P7 induction day in June.
- Ensuring policies and procedures for year 8 pupils are reviewed biannually and the monitoring and evaluating of the on-going transition programme to ensure a beneficial experience.

## 2.0 - Development, planning and implementation of cross-phase departmental links

The reasons for developing cross-phase departmental links are as follows:

- To assist with the continuity of the curriculum from primary school to secondary school.
- To share expertise, knowledge and resources in subject areas necessary for the delivery of the curriculum.
- To allow pupils the opportunity to experience discreet subject areas not studied at Key Stage 2, example ICT (Minecraft), HE or T&D.
- To allow pupils to familiarise themselves with St. Joseph's teaching and learning and experience a taste of school life at St. Joseph's.

The above aims will be achieved in the following ways:

- P5 day - P5 pupils from our feeder primary schools will be invited to St. Joseph's where they will experience three separate activities, possibly Science, PE, HE and T&D or Art, IT and Languages, etc.
- P6 day - a separate day will be assigned for P6 pupils. Again three separate activities will be on offer. These activities will be different from the P5 activities so pupils will have different experiences on their two visits.
- Our school resources and subject expertise is available on request to all our feeder primary schools.
- Individual departments also have links with some of our feeder primary schools. Our RE department has set up links between sixth year RE students and primary school first communion pupils known as 'Faith Friends', this is hoped to be extended to also include primary school confirmation pupils. Through our English department our year 8 pupils send letters to their former primary schools at the end of term one. Our Art department has held ceramic and glazing workshops for pupils from some of our feeder primary schools.
- Christmas packs delivered to local feeder schools to encourage students to develop their thinking skills and personal capabilities through the building of Christmas tree decorations designed and cut out using the Laser cutter in T&D.
- Links made to Primary Schools through Programme, Digital Schools House (2020-21) working alongside P5 class locally with Digital Co-Ordinator as lead contact.
- Relevant and appropriate opportunities to encourage primary school visits to St. Joseph's. (example - The Wheel of Fortune or Christmas Fair)

### **3.0 Addendum due to COVID-19**

Due to unprecedented times it was essential to incorporate different strategies to help manage the transition of primary 7 students into Year 8.

The following strategies were made to help manage the current restrictions and to maintain the links made with schools whilst supporting students during the transfer in this stressful and unprecedented time.

- Teams video calls with Principal, Pastoral VP and Principal Secretary to confirm transferring students and final student numbers.
- Links made with Primary School via phone calls and e-mails to aid and assist in collation of data of Primary 7 students.
- Data collection forms distributed and returned with details inputted into Excel spreadsheet.
- Liaison with Pastoral VP and Learning Support Manager to develop class lists with social distant meetings with Head of Year and Head of Junior School.
- Creation of Survival Kit for Year 8's to collect when registering. The pack included stationery pack, water bottle, school prayer, treats and school guide to Year 8.
- Socially distant entry to Year 8 with support from Year 8 Pastoral Team and Head of School, Senior Management Team, Pastoral VP and Principal.
- New Year 8 Induction Booklet to aid and assist in the settling in of student. These activities were to be completed with assistance from Form Teacher to help build self-esteem, team work and getting to know others.
- Creation of jigsaw to help as a class activity to develop a sense of community and that each individual in the class belongs and fits with their friends to make up their new class.
- Christmas activities delivered to Primary Schools to complete prior to Christmas. These activities were educationally engaging, fun and interactive whilst promoting St Joseph's Boys' School.
- Development alongside PR Manager and Pastoral VP in creating the school prospectus to be delivered to Primary Schools and distributed to students and parents.
- Liaison with PR Manager and Pastoral VP in developing virtual Open Night and videos to welcome students and parents to St Joseph's Boys' School.

St. Joseph's will continue to develop cross-phase curriculum links through virtual links, school visits (when safe to do so) and projects and will take advantage of any opportunity that will facilitate the smooth transition of the pupils from primary school to secondary school.

This policy will be reviewed on a biannual basis by the primary-secondary liaison co-ordinator, senior management and relevant Heads of Department. It will be submitted to the BOG for ratification.