



St Mary's Primary School  
Banbridge

# Transition and Induction Policy



Denise Quigley Foundation Stage Coordinator June 2021

## Our Mission Statement

"At St Mary's the child is at the heart of the Catholic faith community. As a school, we aim to provide a high standard of child centred education, in a safe, supportive learning environment, where respect and Christian values are promoted."

**Induction** is the process by which children are introduced to their educational environment in a pre-school setting and/or the first year of the Foundation Stage in primary school. It is defined as, the process where policy and practice has been adapted to support children, in settling in to their new learning environment, in preparation for future learning and development.

The purpose of induction is to develop a positive relationship between the staff in the education setting, the parents/carers, and the child. It is important that parents/carers and staff work together to support the child during the settling in process.

**Transition** is another word for change. Transitions are part of everyone's life. When transitions work well, they help children and young people to develop confidence and acquire skills to manage future changes in their lives. The vast majority of children and young people look forward to moving on in learning and in life. Whilst becoming resilient and being able to cope with change is a key life skill, we need to be mindful about children's wellbeing. Transition puts enormous demands on to children - socially, linguistically, emotionally, academically and practically. Some children will inevitably find transition more difficult than others. A good transition can mean the difference between floundering and flourishing.

Starting or leaving primary school can be an exciting time for children, but it can also come with challenges. By preparing children and their families for this transition in advance, and being aware of any anxieties that may arise during the transition period, school staff can ensure that pupils and parents and carers can take this next step with confidence. If children are starting at primary school, it may take some time for them to adjust and for the change to feel normal. If

they are leaving primary education to start at secondary school, they may feel anxious about a new school environment and new classmates. Limited contact with their new school due to the pandemic may also add to children's worries. Taking care to prepare for transitions can help parents know how to support their children and help setting staff to ensure they manage the transition sensitively and effectively.

In this policy, 'transition' describes the movement that takes place from one familiar setting (including the home), to another.

### **Aims and Objectives**

We want our children to experience smooth, happy and effective transitions from the pre-school setting into the Foundation Stage, from one year group to the next, through the key stages and finally, when the children transition to their secondary school level of education. We want to ensure that the pace and quality of learning is maintained, and that all our children continue to make the very best progress. Support from parents and staff at school can help the children transition more smoothly if we:

- Talk with them about what is going to happen
- Encourage them to talk about any concerns or anxieties
- Listen carefully to their concerns and consider sharing them with other relevant people
- Help them become familiar with the new school setting

### **The aim of this policy is to:**

- Promote the smooth transition of children at the start of each new setting.
- Prevent and alleviate stress.
- Promote continuity of teaching and learning.

## Policy Principles

- Approaches to teaching and learning are disseminated at the point of transition
- Planning is based upon assessment information from the previous class / setting
- Styles of teaching and learning meet the needs of the children and not pre-conceived notions of what is appropriate for the next phase / key stage
- There is a professional regard for the information from the previous setting / phase
- Children are able to enjoy new approaches at transition
- Transition motivates and challenges children
- Staff allocation gives attention to the particular needs of the children

## Key principles on which we operate

The collection of information prior to the children starting in a new setting will be in cooperation and in partnership with parents/carers, existing staff, receiving staff and, if age appropriate, with the child.

Discussions and collection of information will focus on the whole child and not just child development or academic achievement: routines, interests, the family unit, and relevant medical information alongside any additional needs will build up a **profile** of each child.

Timescales for transition are variable to meet the individual needs of the child.

Other relevant information, for example, social care issues, special educational needs, children looked after, (all compliant with Data Protection Act.) will be shared on a 'need to know' basis, as per Child Protection Policy.

The Board of Governors, Principal and Staff are fully committed to providing a high standard of child centred education, in a safe, supportive learning environment.

## **Entry to St Mary's Nursery School**

We fully appreciate how privileged we are to have our own Nursery Unit within St Mary's Primary School. We realise that providing the highest quality 'first steps' in the educational journey of our pupils is reliant on us developing welcoming, nurturing and supportive relationships with, the parents and other significant adults in the lives of the children. We want to learn all about their children so that we can do our very best to help him/her settle into the exciting, loving world of Nursery and experience the optimum start to his/her education. Children's experiences prior to starting pre-school will vary and this should be considered when planning the induction process.

### **Guidance on Induction and Transition - Pre-school Education Department of Education 2021**

Generally, it is expected that: The majority of children should be settled into the pre-school setting within the first two to three weeks of September (dependent on the number of classes per setting, class size and staff ratio), with all children attending daily, for their full session, no later than the end of September.

For full time sessions, it is expected that the majority of children should be staying for meals within four weeks of their start date. It is particularly important that children entitled to free school meals are settled in and staying for their meals at the earliest possible date in September;

Arrangements for settling in should be flexible rather than fixed, to ensure every child's individual needs are met. This is particularly important for those children who may find it difficult to settle, and may require a shorter session at the beginning with the aim of building up to the full session time.

The following steps are taken to ensure that both the child and parents/carers are confident, informed, happy and relaxed about the school:

- The Nursery Team are keen to establish a positive relationship with the parent/carer and the child, as early as possible. Effective relationships give parents/carers confidence in the setting. The Nursery Teacher makes contact with parents/carers early in June (prior to the child starting nursery in September). Parents/carers are invited to attend an induction afternoon. This meeting is an opportunity for the teacher to gather practical information about the child; health conditions, dietary needs, sleeping routines and any additional support they may need. Parents are encouraged to share their worries and concerns at this initial face-to-face meeting. The teacher can also identify areas the child may struggle in or excel in. Seesaw for Schools, a digital app-based platform that allows pupils, teachers, and parents/carers, to engage, is the main form of communication between teacher and parent/carer and child, in the nursery unit. A Seesaw code needed for pupil engagement, is issued at this time. The teacher explains the staggered intake process and how it is used to ensure children get enough attention whilst they are coping with this settling in period.
- The nursery teacher has composed an interactive book about Tigger, (the nursery mascot), who is starting nursery class too. This book is sent electronically to the child. Tigger brings the children on an exciting adventure to St Mary's Nursery Unit. Tigger shares with the children, how he is feeling about starting nursery school. He explains how the classroom is set up in the nursery class and how to access play areas, toilets, quiet areas, outdoors etc He talks about the drop-off and collection routines/ toileting routines/playtime/outdoor learning and the school day in nursery class. This ebook contains an audio message of greeting from each team member.
- A guidelines booklet - information on how the parent/carer can support the child in his/her preparation for nursery. Parents receive tips on how to ditch the dummy/toilet training/children's personal hygiene routine. The importance of the bedtime routine and sharing stories with children to support the development of speech and language is discussed. This booklet is emailed after this initial contact as a point of reference for parents/carers.
- A Welcome Pack - information pack (including core policies) are given to all parents/carers. The Core Policies pack includes Child Protection Summary, Complaints and Suggestion Policy, Intimate Care Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Positive Behaviour Policy and Pastoral Care Policy.

- Home visits will take place during the last week of August to meet the child and parents/carers, and to observe the child in familiar surroundings. The school will follow the government guidelines and are aware of restrictions due to Covid19.
- **Small group induction** with pupils takes place in June before admission. These stay and play sessions enable the children to attend their new classrooms in small groups. This is a relaxed and informal opportunity for the child to meet with his/her new teacher /assistant /peer group and become familiar with his/her new classroom setting.  
Due to Covid19 restrictions, the child and parent/carer only, have individual **Stay and Play sessions**.
- A staggered intake of children will ensure the teacher/key worker can spend time with the child, and support the child with settling in and the development of classroom routines. School meals are available to any child, at parent's/carer's request.
- Parents are given information about the pre-school curriculum, early October, when the majority of children should be settled by this stage.
- There is a very close working relationship between the Nursery Coordinator and the school SENCO; this ensures the needs of pupils with special educational needs are identified and supported early.
- The nursery school teacher engages, where possible, with other care/education providers and other professionals (health, speech and language therapy, social services, educational psychology etc) to gather all relevant information about a child's needs and previous experiences in order to plan an appropriate programme of learning in the nursery unit.
- The Nursery class is invited to school events in the primary school, throughout the year; assemblies/Christmas Nativity performance, Book Fair. This is to demonstrate that the Nursery Unit is seen as an extension of the Primary School.
- 'Link up' digitally via Zoom (term 3), to allow the Nursery pupils to become familiar with the P1 classroom environment and routines.
- Topic planners are shared with parents, in advance, to allow for parent/carer and child discussion at home.
- Parents/carers are advised to download and register with our school texting system: <https://cloud2s.eprintinguk.com/app/administrator/login.php>

This service keeps parents informed and updated with notifications about what is happening in our school and within our local community, school closures, important reminders, and emergency messages.

- Parents are advised to visit our school website regularly and keep up to date with all aspects of school life; galleries of children at work indoors and outdoors, school policies, curriculum support and guidance.

### **Transition from Pre-School to Primary One in the Foundation Stage:**

By the time they start primary school, the majority of children<sup>1</sup> will have benefitted from a pre-school experience. The overall aim of the process below, is to minimise the settling in period to ensure that all children are settled into, and experience, the full day in Primary One as early as possible, or appropriate to a child's individual needs.

- Individual tours of the school are offered to all incoming parents/carers, and children
- A virtual tour of the school is available to view on our school website [www.stmarysprimaryschoolbanbridge](http://www.stmarysprimaryschoolbanbridge)
- **Planning** should start at the beginning of the child's last term in nursery. The more complex a child's needs, the more time is needed for planning and preparation. Each young person is individual and thus the solutions will be individual.
- A Primary 1 induction video is available to view on the school website [www.stmarysprimaryschoolbanbridge](http://www.stmarysprimaryschoolbanbridge) - Foundation Stage - Primary One - Induction Video
- There is **close liaison** between Nursery/Preschool settings, and Primary 1 teachers. Primary 1 teachers visit local pre-schools in May, to meet the children who will be part of the new intake in September. They can observe the children at play in familiar surroundings, and stay for dinner with the children in the setting.
- Visits are organised to ensure all relevant information about children's needs is communicated appropriately. Verbal/written reports, observations and personal information is shared. The Primary One teachers meet with the

staff from the nursery unit/other preschool settings, to discuss the end of year data within a **Pupil Progress Meeting**. This report on children's level of development is provided, to enable the primary 1 teaching staff to plan effectively and ensure the first weeks are not too overwhelming for new children.

- **Induction information** for children starting in September, is distributed prior to the summer break. It explains the settling in process and provides parents with start dates and expected duration of sessions in September. A welcome letter with teacher's and classroom assistant's photograph is sent to the parent/carer and child.
- Parents/carers are invited to attend a **P1 Induction Afternoon** in the month of June, prior to the child starting primary one in September. At this meeting the Foundation Stage Coordinator will talk through the transition process and what to expect in primary one.
- An **information pack** (including core policies) is given to all parents. The Core Policies pack includes Child Protection Summary, Complaints and Suggestion Policy, Intimate Care Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Positive Behaviour Policy and Pastoral Care Policy.
- A **resource pack** is provided for each child starting primary 1. This pack has been put together to help parents and pre-school staff, plan transitions for children moving from pre-school to primary school. It provides a range of activities, to aid discussion about the child's new primary one setting.
- A series of **induction afternoons** for parents/carers and pupils, are planned for. These **stay and play sessions** enable the children to attend their new classrooms in small groups, in June prior to starting primary 1. This is a relaxed and informal opportunity for the child to meet with his/her new teacher /assistant /peer group and become familiar with his/her new classroom setting.

Due to Covid19 restrictions, the child and parent/carer have individual stay and play sessions.

- **Home visits** will take place during Induction Week for children who did not attend a pre-school setting to meet the child and parents and observe the child in familiar surroundings. The school will follow the government guidelines and are aware of restrictions due to Covid19.

- The Primary 1 teachers engage, where possible, with other care/education providers and other professionals (health, speech and language therapy, social services, educational psychology etc) **to gather all relevant information** about a child's needs and previous experiences in order to plan an appropriate programme of learning in Primary One.
- We operate **a policy of staggering** our new primary one intake for the first two weeks, building up to a full pattern of attendance by week three in September, for the majority of children.
- If required, different arrangements will be put in place, to take account of the individual circumstances and needs of a child. Where this is the case, the parent/carer will be informed about such additional arrangements deemed necessary, to help the child settle in more comfortably.
- **A base line assessment** of each child is completed during phased settling in period. Observations of each child highlight the need for any early intervention.
- **Children will go home at 12.30pm.** for the first two weeks in September School meals are available to children entitled to free school meals, if requested, during these first two weeks.
- Week 3 in September - the school day is **extended to a full school day** (8.45a.m.- 1.30p.m.). for the majority of children. School meals are now available for all children
- The **consistency** in approach to learning, behaviour expectations and routines, between the nursery unit /other pre-school settings, and Primary 1, enable children to adapt more confidently. Children in primary 1 are familiar with the play based approach to learning, as they experienced it in the pre-school setting. The Primary One curriculum builds on the children's previous and existing knowledge and skills.
- Topic planners are shared with parents, in advance, to allow for parent/carer and child discussion at home.
- Parents are invited to attend a curriculum evening at the end of September. At this meeting the Foundation Stage Coordinator provides information about the early years curriculum.
- Parents/carers are advised to download and register with our school texting system: <https://cloud2s.eprintinguk.com/app/administrator/login.php>

This service keeps parents informed and updated with notifications about what is happening in our school and within our local community, school closures, important reminders, and emergency messages.

- Parents are advised to visit our school website regularly, [www.stmarysprimaryschoolbanbridge.com](http://www.stmarysprimaryschoolbanbridge.com) and keep up to date with all aspects of school life; galleries of children at work indoors and outdoors, school policies, curriculum support and guidance.
- The Foundation Stage staff are always available before and after school to **chat to parents informally** - they are **proactive** in dealing with any issues that may arise.
- Label all of your child's belongings - school bag, coat, jumper, lunchbox.

### **Class Compilation for Primary 1**

The school teaching staff will be responsible for the compilation of Primary 1 classes and will consider **gender, age, small friendship groupings** and **special educational needs**. Children arriving from the same pre-school setting outside of the school will be placed in the same Primary 1 class, unless otherwise stated by a parent.

### **Supporting Newcomer Pupils in St Mary's Primary School**

"Every child here has a right to education." This fundamental human right is enshrined in the Human Rights Act 1998.

During recent years, schools in the north of Ireland have been experiencing a steady growth in their enrolment of children from various parts of the world. A 'newcomer pupil' refers to a child or young person who has enrolled in a school but who does not have satisfactory language skills to participate fully in the school curriculum and does not have a language in common with the teacher. (ESaGS). Any child facing a barrier to learning may require additional support to, overcome the difficulty and develop to their full potential.

It is important that all children feel welcome in our school, and are supported as they become familiar with their new surroundings and the language. Newcomer

children will invariably need support in settling into a new school, a new community and a very different culture. However, their most pressing need is support with language, to enable them to access the curriculum, and partake in every aspect of school life.

The **Newcomer Policy** elaborates on how to support Newcomers in St Mary's.

**Transition from Class to Class** - Throughout the child's time at St Mary's Primary School, smooth transition from class to class will be fostered by **Familiarisation**

- Pre-school attend whole school assemblies- music, concerts etc.
- Children are encouraged to visit other year groups to share and celebrate achievement and good behaviour.
- Pre-school children have opportunities to use the school facilities, for example, the assembly hall, breakfast club, the school garden area, the school library, etc. and socialise with other children in the school.
- Teachers meet in the summer term to hand over information to the new classes teachers.
- One formal visit to new classroom to meet the new teacher in June.
- Primary 7 boys buddy up P4 children, as a reading partner.
- Class behaviour and expectations set by class teacher immediately in September.
- Key Stage Curriculum meetings in September, are held in September to introduce expectations of new class and curriculum.
- Playground Buddy System/Digital leaders/School Council Members are introduced every year to the children throughout the school, excluding the nursery unit, via assemblies and class visits.

**Transfer of records:** To help with transition between classes, the teachers ensure that key documents are passed on. These documents include:

Transfer of pupil profile information which may include:

IEPs /Use of SIMS data (PIM and PIE) /CBAs /Assessment Folder /Profile folder / Literacy Record of Achievement / Pupil Report/ Cross Circular Skills Levels of Attainment / Teachers' record of ability groupings in Literacy, Mathematics and Spellings.

The most recent Individual Educational Plan in an IEP class folder.

Behaviour records, for example, risk assessments and Behaviour Support Plans

Current attainment groupings for Literacy, Mathematics, and Spellings.

SEN information

More documents may be passed on depending on what is needed for each class.

All documents are electronic and accessible on the school's server.

### **Support to ease the transition and induction of children transferring from another school to St Mary's**

- Individual tours are offered to all incoming parents and children
- Induction sessions are available to allow a child to become familiar with their new class and surroundings
- Parents receive a 'Parents' Pack' with information about the school
- New children assessed quickly by class teacher and / or SENCO
- A 'buddy' is identified to help the new child to integrate
- Records from previous school are made available to the class teacher and SENCO
- Confirmation is sought that all necessary records have been received by the school, this includes confidential files and safeguarding concerns.

### **Supporting the transition from Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1**

We recognise that for some children this stage of transfer can be problematic so to ensure a smooth transition we have looked at several areas; familiarisation, approaches to teaching and learning and transfer of information.

**Familiarisation:** Children have the opportunity to:

- Attend weekly phase assembly.
- Attend whole school assemblies- music, concerts etc.
- Foundation stages join in with Key Stage 1 Christmas production.
- Children are encouraged to visit other year groups to share achievements.
- Experience child initiated play sessions, which provides an element of consistency to the pupils' routine.
- Foundation Stage children have opportunities to use the school facilities; breakfast club, after school club, soccer coaching sessions, Fun Fit class and Irish Dancing class, allow younger children to interact with older children.
- Share playtime in the playground and interact socially.

### **Supporting the transition from Primary School (Key Stage 2) to Secondary School (Key Stage 3)**

- Teachers, parents/carers and pupils are advised to openly discuss this transition and identify potential worries associated with starting secondary school. It is important that our pupils realise they are not alone if they are feeling worried.
- Children are encouraged to talk to a trusted adult or friend if they have any concerns
- Identify solutions and strategies for looking after their mental health, including self-care
- Transfer meeting for Year 7 pupils in the Autumn Term to explain Transfer Procedure to parents.
- Parents are assisted with the completion of Transfer Forms, if required.
- Transition work completed in 2nd half of summer term.
- Parents and pupils are encouraged to attend Open Nights in schools of interest.
- **Taster Day** - one full school day visit to new secondary school, so children become familiar with the school location, departments and meet the Principal, Vice-principal, Year Tutor, Year 8 form teachers and other peers from various

schools. Children participate in Sport /PE / Cookery / Design and Technology sessions.

- Formal meeting between the Primary 7 teacher and the Year 8 tutor of the receiving secondary school.
- Transfer of records to secondary school - statements of needs, medical information.
- Information including pupil standardised scores, family background, individual interests and needs, medical conditions, behavioural issues, pastoral concerns, of each child is passed onto secondary school to build a generic pupil profile of the child.
- Identified children, (SEN, LAC) receive additional support before and after transition. Transition reviews completed on time.

### **Useful tips to support induction into secondary school**

- Practical tips provided to students on travelling to secondary school - Practice the route during the summer holidays if walking, or the route to where you catch the bus. Practice your Highway Code for crossing roads. Walk with a friend when starting school. Allow extra time than you think to arrive in time to catch the bus.
- Label/name everything, including PE kit and have a list of what should be in the bag that day.
- Choose a rucksack with comfortable shoulder straps, and one with some side or front compartments that can be labelled and used for specific items, e.g. pencil case, lunch. This makes it easier to find items rather than one compartment with everything mixed up together.
- Have a different bag for PE/swimming kit that is always for this function (maybe different colour).
- Sit in class facing the teacher or board and near to them. Don't sit sideways to teacher and sit up with your arms resting on the desk.
- Always look back and double-check your work.
- Establish a homework routine. Always complete the homework diary properly. Break homework down into small steps and set small goals. Do one and check, and

then move onto the next. Always double-check own work. Getting stuck with homework – have a class buddy that can be contacted about it.

- School uniform - Keep school clothes separate in a cupboard or drawer. If you need to wear a tie, practice at home.
- Feeling worried? - Establish who to go to if there are any problems/concerns. Exercise generally helps with anxiety or anger and frustration, so do something that is not necessarily competitive with others, for example, bike riding, swimming, horse-riding, trampolining, walking.

## **Equal Opportunities**

We recognise that for some children, transition may be a stressful period of time that can impact on their progress. We will therefore ensure we identify those children requiring specific individual support at an early stage and that the receiving teacher is made aware of this.

## **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

Children and parents are actively involved in all transition processes that take place while at St Mary's Primary School, and their perceptions about transition are explored and valued.

Measures are taken to ensure that pupils with learning or access difficulties, experience a similar ease of transfer as other pupils.

We aim to ensure that no member of the school community experiences less favourable treatment or discrimination within the learning environment because of their age; any disability they may have; their ethnicity, colour or national origin; their gender; their religion or beliefs.

We value the diversity of individuals within our school and do not discriminate against anyone because of 'differences'. We believe that all our children matter and we value their families too. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best by taking account of our children's range of life experiences, when devising and implementing school policies and procedures.

**Policy Review** This policy will be regularly reviewed by the *Governing Body* and updated annually in line with *St Mary's Primary School's Policy Schedule*.