

## Class of 2020 - Transitions during COVID-19 School Closure

The transition of young people from primary school to the post-primary setting is a major milestone on a child's educational journey. Demands on children during this transition can present both challenges and opportunities and a successful transition can have long-term positive outcomes in both their educational success and the social and emotional development. For those in the class of 2020, theirs will be an even greater hurdle. Having spent a considerable period out of the school environment and limited interaction with peers, there will be an added dimension to their uncertainty.

Primary schools across the country have been showcasing their creativity in creating virtual messages and farewell videos for their sixth class pupils. Teachers are doing their utmost in a distance learning environment to promote wellbeing among pupils. Schools are also linking with post-primary schools to share information (including virtual tours) of the new school campus to help prepare young people and their families for the transition.

The sharing or transfer of information about individual student's needs is central to effective transition and the Education Passport document designed by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) allows primary schools to prepare a comprehensive, informative and individualised record for each pupil (which is retained until the school principal or designated person with responsibility for initiating pupil information transfers in the post-primary school sends a written request for the children's report cards).

Further to [Guidance on Continuity of Schooling](#) issued by the Department of Education and Skills last month, additional advice has been published for schools to build upon the good practices already in train to support the needs of all pupils regarding transition. Pupils will differ in the level of guidance that they require to manage this period of change. Some pupils may only need general guidance whereas others require more detailed transition plans, for example, those pupils identified as having special educational and/or additional needs, medical needs, those who have recently experienced a family bereavement, children in care, those living in vulnerable families and children who have experienced multiple transitions in their lives. The Continuum of Support provides the framework for schools to develop universal transition support for all students, as well as individualised supports and interventions for those with additional and/or special educational needs.

This document identifies five key elements which support resilience during challenging times and explores how schools may address these aspects in planning for effective transitions for their sixth class pupils.



It is recognised that all schools are different, and schools are best placed to meet should continue to adapt and differentiate the following suggestions to the individual needs of their school and pupils.

<https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/sixth-class-transitions-during-covid-19-school-closures.pdf>