

Dear Parent/Guardian,

St. Oliver Plunkett NS is taking part in the ***In-School Therapy Project*** as part of the ***School Inclusion Model (SIM)***.

What is the project about?

The project involves **school staff, Speech and Language Therapists (SLTs), Occupational Therapists (OTs) and families working together to support the learning of all students**, including students with additional learning needs. There are 75 schools taking part in the project this year (2021/2022 school year).

The project is managed by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE). The therapists in the project will not replace existing HSE or HSE funded SLT and OT services. This means that if your child is currently attending/on a waiting list for a HSE SLT or OT, this will not change. The project is part of the government's overall plan to provide more support to help every child to learn and participate in school to the best of their ability.

Where is it happening?

The In-School Therapy Project, will take place in urban and rural schools in **Dublin, Kildare and West Wicklow**.

What Model of Support will the project adopt?

The project will use a multi-level support model (see below). At all levels of the model, therapists work with school staff to support the learning of students in school lessons and activities.

- At the **Universal School Support Level**, all students can benefit from SLT and OT supports.
- At the **Targeted School Support Level**, those with additional needs can receive extra help where needed.
- At the **Intensive School Support Level**, teachers working with students with complex educational needs can request individualised support.



How will the project work?

The SLTs and OTs will work with school staff to support all students across the whole school environment. Teachers will identify some students with more complex needs that may need more help. The SLTs and OTs will work with school staff to give additional support to these students in their classrooms, in small groups and/or individually as needed.

What could Speech and Language Therapists be doing in schools?

Good speech, language and communication skills **support students to access the curriculum, get along socially with others and actively participate in the learning environment.** SLTs will be working with school staff to help the school **support students to develop their speech, language and communication skills.** These could include helping students to:

- Develop attention and listening skills
- Express themselves using words and sentences
- Explain things
- Understand verbal information and instructions
- Develop vocabulary understanding and use
- Develop social communication

What could Occupational Therapists be doing in schools?

Occupational Therapists work in schools to support students **to participate successfully in the daily occupations/tasks** that happen in the school and classroom. OTs will work with school staff to help the **school support students with daily school tasks**. This could include:

- School work (e.g. keeping on task, handwriting, taking part in sport)
- Life skills (e.g. managing belongings, developing independence in daily routines)
- Self-regulation (e.g. managing focus and attention, maintaining a calm-alert state)
- Break time/play (e.g. peer interactions, turn taking, games)
- Transitions (e.g. between tasks, classes, educational settings)

Do I need to give consent for my child to be part of the project?

If we request that the NCSE SLT/OT work with a teacher to provide individualised support to your child, you will be asked for informed written consent. If the NCSE SLT/OT and a teacher work together to provide additional support to your child as part of the regular classroom teaching or in a group setting, you will be informed by your child's teacher.

If you have any questions or concerns about the work of NCSE Occupational Therapists or Speech and Language Therapists in your child's school, please contact the school.

Kind Regards

Dominic Tyrrell