The purpose in having a Transition PSG (Program Support Group) is to provide an opportunity for both the primary school and secondary school staff to meet and share information that may be supportive in the transition for that child. So, in that meeting, we have the family members present whether it be both parents or one parent or the guardian who will have the child there as well, because it's about the child. We’ll have staff from the primary school and the secondary school, and it's around sharing what we have learned and grown to know about the child. And for the secondary school to gather that information so they're as prepared as they can be to create the environment that they need to create for for that child and that family, but possibly also to talk about strategies that have worked for us with the particular child that we've had really successful, where he's been able to succeed, and also perhaps even to see what the secondary college may be able to offer him as well. So, we can be reinforcing some of the things that he may be part of as he moves across to secondary.

The PSG that we had, we have every year with certainly with MacKillop College next door, but over the last few years we've been trying to have it more and more with some of the other schools. Certainly, with MacKillop College, every student that's in our NCCD funding we have a PSG meeting with them where we’ll invite the student, invite the parent, and then have a chance to debrief with the school afterwards, just to talk about “What are some of the needs of the learner?” “What are some of the challenges of the learner?”

The PSG is a really regular time point that we meet and keep coming back to. It's a time that we can communicate perhaps things that have been happening at home, school can communicate things that have been happening in their environment. We can almost cohesively set goals and so everyone knows that we're on the same page. And so, the message that is portrayed is consistent and that he knows that support comes from his school, from home, but also his future high school. And there's some continuity and some consistency in the message.

As a school, we actually focus quite strongly on making sure that we're all working toward the same goal. So especially critical where there is communication. And the other part of that too is collaboration. So, we do do a lot of work with our families beyond just the PSG or the Transition PSG or any of the PSGs. I suppose it's also ensuring that anyone who has any knowledge about the child or about a situation shares that because when you look at a child, the family has input, the teacher has knowledge, the allied health personnel might have knowledge, the LSO (Learning Support Officer) might have some knowledge. There might be a whole range of people that we need to communicate with to ensure that we've got a full picture of what might be happening for a child or how we might need to therefore adapt programs or implement different strategies.

During the transition period we look at firstly, what are the needs for each of the individual students, and then as a team we look at, okay, what can we do to try and support them? How can we put some transition lessons in process and some transition tasks in process to try and support them. When we meet with MacKillop College we’ll fill out a form that's got all of the information about each student that's attending, and then we'll look at, you know, who are some students that will work really well with them or help them, who are some students that might not be the best influence for them. So just having that open communication with MacKillop is really supportive.

Our PSG has changed significantly over time in relation to the feedback from, not only our school team, but the secondary school team, and also from parents and how they perceive the sessions and how worthwhile they felt that they were for them, and how worthwhile or how successful they were for their child.

We also check in with children in various ways. We also gauge it through really clear I suppose, observations and monitoring of student’s levels of whether it be anxiety or calmness. So, there might be times prior to the meeting or prior to the program being implemented with the child feeling quite anxious. But given perhaps the meeting as well as other aspects of our transition program, which include school visits and meeting other people from the secondary school, those behaviours reduce, and that confidence increases. So, it's feedback in a whole range of areas and we're really very open to change and improving depending on the feedback that we get.

The PSG that we have is probably the biggest thing that we do to try and support. We also have a few other things that we put in place. So, there's an opportunity with MacKillop, we'll send a few students over so that some of those students are getting the opportunity to go over to MacKillop, spend an hour there, spend maybe 2 hours there, and just at least get to know the environment. So, that's one way that really tries to help and support. We've got a couple of the Year 7 coordinators from MacKillop that will be coming down to Corpus Christi and actually talking to all of the seniors just about what are some things to expect, what are some things to be prepared for, but also allow our Year 6s to ask questions to some of the Year 7 teachers as well.

We are a piece of the puzzle and I think if you take one of those pieces of the puzzle out, whether it's the parents or the future high school or the current primary school, there becomes a real deficit, or a void and things are more likely to not go well. This PSG makes everything formalised with very clear goals. There is actually some shape and formulation as to how it goes.

I suppose we’re always very challenged to ensure that we create the conditions, whatever the conditions may be, to ensure the success of every single child. Each person is taken as they are, and we take that from where they're at and we grow them. Our core work is to ensure that in essence, the dignity of every child is always at the highest level and that we support every child to be able to achieve the best that they can achieve. If we can collaborate and communicate and have those conversations, I feel we can really create the environment where everyone feels that they know also what to do and what to expect, because otherwise it's there’s no success in working in isolation.