

School Completion Programme



# Guidelines towards Best Practice



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## Guidelines

towards

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## Contents

<b>Acknowledgments</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Foreword</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Preface</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>SECTION 1: Background of SCP and Methodological Approach</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>SECTION 2: Activities towards Best Practice</b>	<b>8</b>
1 Attendance Tracking and Monitoring	8
2 Breakfast Clubs/After-School Supports/Homework Clubs	11
3 Transfer Programmes	20
4 Out-of-School Programmes	24
5 Holiday Programmes	27
6 Mentoring Programmes	31
7 Learning Support Programmes	34
8 Social and Personal Development Programmes	36
9 Parental Programmes and Family Support	39
10 Therapeutic Support	42
<b>SECTION 3: Examples of International Interventions</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Glossary of Terms</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Appendix 1</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>List of SCP Projects</b>	<b>68</b>

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# FOREWORD

*Guidelines towards Best Practice* is the latest in a series of publications from the School Completion Programme (SCP) aimed at disseminating information about the Programme's operation and providing practical guidelines on how to implement some of its more successful elements.

In SCP we are constantly learning from each other. *Guidelines towards Best Practice* is a further step in that process. This valuable resource brings together the combined contributions of over 40 Local Co-ordinators and Projects and as such it represents the shared wisdom and experience of a broad cross-section of SCP personnel.

It is often said that the work we are engaged in is innovative, and 'cutting edge'. For that very reason it is not readily found in books or journals. We feel it is important to document this work, not just for SCP projects but also for anybody engaged in the area of educational disadvantage and in combating early school leaving. The guidelines are not intended to be taken as a definitive template of how supports must be implemented, but we hope that in each section there will be useful pointers and practical advice on the best way of setting up and maintaining these supports. The section on international projects reminds us that the challenges we face are not confined to this country, but are to be found everywhere.

I would like to thank all of those who have contributed towards the Guidelines and those involved in its publication. A special word of thanks to Marian Brattman, who has worked tirelessly and with great patience to ensure that this document sees the light of day.

Aidan Savage,  
School Completion Programme,  
National Co-ordinator.

## PREFACE

The School Completion Programme (SCP) is an initiative that aims to have a positive impact on retention for young people at risk of early school leaving. This is achieved in a number of ways utilising a range of innovative, creative as well as tried and tested interventions. What makes the School Completion Programme model unique is its 'bottom-up' approach, which allows Local Management Committees (school-based, community, statutory and voluntary interests), to put together plans and supports that target the needs of local young people at risk of early school leaving.

SCP has been in existence since 2002. Currently there are 82 projects nationwide comprising 299 primary schools and 112 post-primary schools. Local Management Committees in each project area have worked diligently to put together retention plans supporting young people between the ages of 4 and 18 who are at risk of early school leaving.

To date, Local Management Committees have devised three annual retention plans in their project areas, which outline a range of supports and interventions for young people at risk of leaving school early. Many different supports have been developed, adopted and reviewed over this period under the four SCP headings: In-school support, After-school support, Out-of-school support and Holiday support. It is therefore timely to highlight the innovative range of good practice that has been developed nationwide in various SCP projects.

# INTRODUCTION

In August 2004, the School Completion Programme Support Unit produced the booklet *Activities in the School Completion Programme*. The publication documents the range of supports offered by SCP under a number of headings. It offers the wider education community an insight into the work involved in SCP.

*Guidelines towards Best Practice* documents some of those supports offered in SCP in greater detail, with the objective of collating a best practice resource. The aim is to showcase interventions offered in SCP that support young people at risk of early school leaving. The interventions highlighted have been chosen for inclusion by Local Co-ordinators who oversee the implementation of local retention plans. As SCP is a 'bottom-up' model of support, the examples of best practice highlighted here should not be seen as the definitive range of supports that must be offered in every SCP project, but examples of interventions that have worked in particular areas. These may be modified for use in other SCP projects or in other projects outside of SCP that are working to support young people who are at risk of early school leaving.



***The resource pack is set out in three sections:***

- ***Background of SCP and Methodological Approach***
- ***Examples of Best Practice in SCP***
- ***Examples of International Interventions***

# SECTION 1:

## BACKGROUND OF SCP AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The School Completion Programme is a Department of Education & Science initiative that aims to have a significant positive impact on levels of pupil retention in primary and second level schools and on the numbers of pupils who successfully complete the Senior Cycle, or equivalent.

SCP is based on the concept of integrated services. Effective supports must include multi-faceted actions that respond to young people's needs. They need to be both preventative and supportive, ranging from social and personal development to After-school and Out-of-school supports, including sport and leisure activities as well as supports that target the young person's home and community life. SCP is a collaborative programme that works in partnership with family, community, youth, and sporting organisations and with relevant national statutory and voluntary bodies.

### *SCP has adopted the following aims to govern its work:*

1. To retain young people in the formal education system to completion of the Senior Cycle, or equivalent.
2. To improve the quality of participation and educational attainment of targeted children and young people in the educational process.
3. To bring together all local stakeholders (home, school, youth, community, statutory and voluntary) to tackle early school leaving.
4. To offer positive supports in primary and post-primary schools towards the prevention of educational disadvantage.
5. To encourage young people who have left mainstream education to return to school.
6. To influence in a positive way policies relating to the prevention of early school leaving in the education system.

### *SCP is based on a number of principles:*

1. The programme is based on the principle of **partnership**. Schools (primary and post-primary), parents and relevant agencies collaborate formally through Local Management Committees and informally through the Local Co-ordinators.
2. The programme is **young person-centred**. Each targeted young person at risk of early school leaving has supports tailor-made to suit his or her personal and academic needs.
3. The programme is **preventative**. Young people at risk of early school leaving are supported from an early age in recognition that home, school, environmental, social and economic factors influence the patterns of early school leaving.



4. The programme is based on a **'bottom-up' approach**. A range of supports are offered in each cluster (project area) depending on local needs, being mindful that local factors can influence early school leaving.
5. The young person's inclusion in the programme is based on an **agreed set of criteria** targeting those most at risk of early school leaving.
6. A **whole-school approach** can be utilised in order to minimise the potential for stigmatisation of particular young people at risk of early school leaving.
7. Supports are offered In-school, After-school, Out-of-school and during Holiday time in recognition of the fact that **continuous support** must be given to young people at risk of early school leaving.
8. **Breaking the pattern** of early school leaving and tackling educational disadvantage are the primary aims of the programme.

## Methodology

In 2004, the SCP Support Unit approved a framework for documenting best practice in SCP local projects. Questionnaires were sent to the 82 SCP projects nationwide (Appendix 1), with the aim of directly hearing and documenting the experience of participants. Local Co-ordinators were asked a number of questions relating to the supports offered in their project. They were asked to self-select **two** supports offered in their project that fit a number of criteria agreed to be effective measures of best practice by the SCP Support Unit, including:

- **Level of consultation with stakeholders.**
- **Level of participation by young people.**
- **Interagency collaboration.**
- **Level of attendance.**
- **On-going review.**
- **Level and effectiveness of targeting.**
- **Expertise of personnel.**
- **Quality of outcomes.**

The best elements of the supports were identified by Local Co-ordinators and have been amalgamated (pages 8-45) to showcase models of best practice for those supports (e.g., Attendance Tracking and Monitoring). Each model is supplemented with regional (Irish) examples of practice in SCP projects. International examples of practice relating to the ten themes are also identified (pages 46-64).

**Examples of best practice in the following areas have been identified in SCP:**

1. **Attendance Tracking and Monitoring.**
2. **Breakfast Clubs/After-School Supports/Homework Clubs.**
3. **Transfer Programmes.**
4. **Out-of-School Programmes.**
5. **Holiday Programmes.**
6. **Mentoring Programmes.**
7. **Learning Support Programmes.**
8. **Social and Personal Development Programmes.**
9. **Parental Programmes and Family Support.**
10. **Therapeutic Support.**

## SECTION 2:

# ACTIVITIES TOWARDS BEST PRACTICE

### 1 ATTENDANCE TRACKING AND MONITORING

Attendance Tracking and Monitoring is one of the most widely implemented supports offered in SCP. The aim is to track the daily attendance of either the target group at risk of early school leaving or the whole class/school in order to avoid any potential stigmatisation. The tracking of young people at risk of early school leaving is a cornerstone approach in the work of SCP and often leads to the identification of other difficulties in the class or at home. This can ultimately trigger other supports being offered to those young people who have poor attendance in order to stimulate a heightened interest in school.

#### WHAT WORKS? Guidelines towards Best Practice

- Designate the job of attendance tracking to a specific individual. This person can track attendance in all schools included in the cluster or, where possible, an individual in each school can be assigned the role of Attendance Tracker, Monitor or Secretary.
- Ensure that students know this person and that they are aware that he or she has been assigned the role of Attendance Tracker, Monitor or Secretary.
- Monitor attendance on a daily basis. Put in place a system whereby attendance and punctuality are checked at the same time each day.
- Ensure that attendance records are kept up to date on a daily or weekly basis, indicating what follow-up process was adopted for non-attendance and the outcome.
- Hold weekly team meetings with Attendance Tracking and Monitoring personnel to share information.
- Contact with the family/guardian should be made by the appropriate school authority or by a person designated by SCP.
- Work in collaboration with the Home/School/Community Liaison Co-ordinator, Education Welfare Officer, Social Workers, Visiting Teacher for Travellers, Youth Services and other relevant agencies in the local area.
- Work with the designated person or other personnel to contact home as an 'immediate response'.
- Find out why the young person is not attending school on a regular basis in a non-threatening and non-confrontational way and put together a range of supports to help that young person improve his or her relationship with the school.
- Establish a reward system for young people whose attendance has improved.
- Monitor attendance in the whole school but with particular emphasis on the target group.
- Review attendance strategies formally at Local Management Committee meetings and informally with other stakeholders.



- Support schools in setting up a 'same day' response system.
- Ensure that a transparent health and safety policy is known and implemented by all stakeholders.
- Ensure that a transparent child protection policy is known and implemented by all stakeholders.

### **EXAMPLE 1: Attendance Tracking Programme - Leinster Region**

1. Students are marked present or absent each day by their teacher and the Attendance Secretary collects this information.
2. Attendance Secretary records late-comers (by physically being present at the student entrance door and taking names).
3. Attendance Secretary inputs absence and late data into an attendance tracking computer programme.
4. Phone calls are made home to parents or guardians of those unexcused students, letters are also sent home on a regular basis.
5. Principals, teachers, HSCL Co-ordinators and SCP Local Co-ordinator are in constant communication with the Attendance Secretary.
6. When necessary, the Attendance Secretary also communicates with the Education Welfare Officer, Juvenile Liaison Officer, Visiting Teacher for Travellers, Social Workers, Youth Services, and others.

### **EXAMPLE 2: Attendance Tracking Programme - North-West Region**

Rolls are scanned into the computer every morning. The information is available by computer link to the SCP office, which is in the same building and is used to access information about attendance. The Secretary/Project Worker monitors attendance:

- Year Heads are provided with a list of poor attendance.
- Contact can be made with parents by phone or letter.
- Individual attendance can be assessed immediately.
- All targeted students are monitored and the number of days absent is included in their profile on a monthly basis.
- Rewards are given on a term and annual basis to good attenders.
- The number of absent days for each pupil is posted in staff rooms at regular intervals.
- In September, Class Tutors and Year Heads are given lists of how many days each pupil was absent in the previous year.
- Late comers are monitored.

### EXAMPLE 3: Attendance Tracking Programme - Munster Region

**Primary level:** A monthly certificate system has been in operation for two years. Each month those with full attendance (including those absent one day) are awarded certificates. Certificate winners may then win a prize by guessing a number. It is an exciting time each month. It is rewarding good attendance and while it is on a whole-school basis, it has proved to be very effective for SCP pupils. Some students were not previously aware of the number of days they were absent. Most SCP children get certificates now and there is no stigmatisation from other students.

**Post-primary level:** There is a monthly check on attendance of all SCP students and this keeps the project informed on how they are performing. For those who are struggling the most, there is a weekly or often daily check and then these young people are followed up by contact with home. This work is tied into dealing with other issues that those young people are struggling with. Individual learning plans and the provision of educational and other supports are developed, where appropriate.



### MAIN OUTCOMES

- Heightens importance of attendance for parents and students.
- Increases motivation for parents and students to improve attendance.
- Reduces number of 'lates' and absences in the school and target group.
- Pinpoints students with poor attendance, allowing for better supports to become available to them.
- Increases contact time with targeted students and improves pastoral care support.
- Provides an early warning system for early school leaving.
- Develops co-operation between the school and community at local level.
- Improves engagement in school activities.
- Improves academic performance.
- Allows for comprehensive records on student attendance to become available.



## 2A BREAKFAST CLUBS

Breakfast Clubs are a feature of many SCP projects. Education and health research has documented that having breakfast greatly improves the concentration levels of students (Massachusetts Public Health Association, 2005). It has also been shown that students who are educationally disadvantaged often go without breakfast (Combat Poverty Agency, 2000). The social aspect of Breakfast Clubs where students can meet in a relaxed setting cannot be overestimated.

### WHAT WORKS? Guidelines towards Best Practice

- Gain parental/guardian consent for inclusion in the Breakfast Club by way of a signed permission form and explain the workings of the club to parents or guardians.
- Deploy personnel to run a Breakfast Club each morning. Volunteers may be an option for some projects.
- Consult with other agencies in the local area that may be already providing Breakfast Clubs. Youth and community services are established providers of Breakfast Clubs.
- Offer Breakfast Clubs on a whole class/whole-school basis as this avoids stigmatisation for young people targeted by SCP. It also offers an opportunity for all students to mix and relax before their first class.
- Provide nutritious food to all students, including hot foods, where possible. Breakfast may well be the only hot food a young person receives during the day.
- Provide additional high-nutrition foods to young people that have difficult and chaotic home lives, if necessary. Ensure that this service is delivered to the young person in a manner that is discreet and respectful.
- Ensure continuity of staff as it allows for good relationships to be built up with students.
- If possible, allocate a specific room for the Breakfast Club so that students always have a familiar environment.
- Aim to involve parents or guardians in the running of Breakfast Clubs, as this is a non-threatening environment for them and a good means to see how their children are getting on.
- Breakfast Clubs can provide an opportunity to supply young people with the equipment they need for class, therefore avoiding embarrassment/disruption in the classroom.
- Provide leadership roles to young people who attend and ensure that tidying up duties are integrated into the programme.
- Involve the wider community in the Breakfast Club. Some local companies may provide food and drink if asked. Other agencies (e.g. Department of Social and Family Affairs) may provide funding for the running of Breakfast Clubs in the local area.
- Ensure a fair and transparent code of conduct.
- Use the Breakfast Club to improve young person's participation in such activities as signing and drafting a contract, voting activities and serving themselves.

- Ensure that the club is promoted widely to improve attendance.
- Ensure that a transparent child protection policy is known and implemented by all stakeholders.
- Ensure that a transparent health and safety policy is known and implemented by all stakeholders.
- Carry out an evaluation of the support on an annual basis with all stakeholders, including the young people.

### EXAMPLE 1: Breakfast Club - Munster Region

*A Breakfast Club operates in both target schools five times a week. Breakfast is provided in an allocated room and supervised by SCP personnel. A wide range of food items is available including fruit, yoghurts, toast, juice, cereal, sausages and rashers. The Department of Social and Family Affairs contributes to the running costs.*

### EXAMPLE 2: Breakfast Club - Dublin Central

*The Breakfast Club has been running for two years in the schools and has noticeably contributed positively to the atmosphere and general feel of the school. It has become an integral part of the student and staff life in school.*

*It runs every morning for one hour and accommodates on average 30 students each morning. In terms of target students, half of them are consistent in attending the Breakfast Club each morning. The students very much own the club and this ownership has been encouraged by staff and management of the school.*

*Two parents staff it, with the Co-ordinator in attendance every morning to actively motivate and encourage students to attend. It has become a place where students can go each morning to eat healthily, play games and chat with peers in safe, comfortable surroundings. More importantly, it encourages school attendance, punctuality and settles students down before class time.*

*The level of attendance is also encouraged through competitions held within the Club where students can win prizes. A Breakfast Club draw is held at the end of each month where students can win prizes under such categories as **'Students with the best attendance'**, **'Most helpful Student'** and **'Tidiest Student'**. All of the above strategies aim to maintain attendance among target students and to build up the profile of the Club within the school.*

*The Club has become part of the 'Discipline for Learning' programme in the school where students can earn 'positives' for contributing positively to the Club. In addition, the students have developed a recycling system in the club where plastics and tetra-packs, etc., are recycled as part of the SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education) programme within the school curriculum. Not only has the Breakfast Club become an integral part of the school, it has shifted to become part of the whole-school curriculum.*

### EXAMPLE 3: Breakfast Club - Dublin North

Volunteers run the Breakfast Clubs for the schools in the SCP project. Food is ordered by phone from a local grocer, delivered to school and paid for by SCP and the Department of Social and Family Affairs. Clubs open at 8am and the last pupil is served at 8.50am. In secondary schools, pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for serving food and tidying up. Students sit and converse and have a relaxed time in the club. Some take the opportunity to complete unfinished homework. This gives the staff a chance to discuss school issues such as homework with the students.

In primary schools, the priority is around providing young people with care, attention and nutritious food. The food is served to them and cleared by the staff. Again, the young people enjoy the socialisation aspect of the club. The young people are invited to attend the club by class teachers and notices in the school. All students are invited to attend with particular attention being paid to targeted students. Attendance is taken; arrival and departure times are noted.

The Breakfast Club is primarily run by volunteers either from the school or local community. They bring with them knowledge of the young people and of the community, and a commitment to the aims of the programme. A Barnardos 'Springboard' project runs one of the Breakfast Clubs in the area, bringing with them a professional knowledge of family support.



### MAIN OUTCOMES

- Improves school attendance and punctuality.
- Improves concentration in class.
- Creates positive links between families and the school.
- Creates a sense of security in the school environment.
- Provides a mechanism to assist young people who may not present as in need.
- Allows for a more positive outlook toward school resulting in improved participation.
- Improves interaction with adults.
- Meets nutritional needs.
- Develops social skills.
- Allows participants to have fun.
- Improves peer relationships.

## 2B AFTER-SCHOOL SUPPORTS

After-School Supports focus on the personal and social development of young people, aiming to enrich their overall educational experience by providing fun activities that tap into the many talents of young people. Programmes that focus on activities like Drama, Music, Art, Craftwork and Sport enable children to develop a range of creative and sporting skills. These activities help to boost self-esteem, have positive consequences for the classroom and are particularly important for academically weaker students. A rich After-School Support programme has the potential to tap into the multiple intelligences of students in areas such as visual, spatial, inter-personal and body kinaesthetic pathways to learning.

### WHAT WORKS? Guidelines towards Best Practice

- Gain parental/guardian consent for inclusion in the After-School Support by way of a signed permission form and explain the workings of the support to parents or guardians.
- An integrated approach is often vital in the provision of well-structured After-School Supports. Local Youth Services play a key role in the provision of After-School services. Consult with the local services in the area so as to avoid duplication.
- After-School Supports should be well resourced with quality equipment and experienced personnel. Have enough flexibility in the support to employ specialist individuals who can offer activities such as Drama, Pottery, Dance, Music, Sport and Leisure.
- Use the After-School setting as an opportunity for care teams to get to know the needs of high-risk target students with emotional and behavioural problems.
- Locate the After-School Support in a welcoming environment.
- After-School Supports should offer, where possible, a hot meal or a sufficiently filling snack.
- Create on-going contact with parents or guardians in order to make them aware of the positive outcomes from the young person's participation in an After-School Support.
- Parents or guardians may be invited to exhibitions of the pupil's artwork, shows or sports events to become familiar with staff and the activities their son/daughter is engaged in during the After-School Support.
- Ensure a fair and transparent code of conduct. Involving students in drawing up the code of conduct leads to greater ownership.
- Opportunities for contact between After-School support staff and the relevant teaching staff should be facilitated in order to discuss the progress of the young people engaging in the support.
- Provide leadership roles to young people who attend and ensure that tidying up duties are integrated into the programme.
- Be aware that transportation may be a consideration for some young people, particularly in more rural locations. Make provision for transport costs when implementing an After-School Support.

- A basic profile of every young person should be maintained by an appropriate person indicating attendance, level of engagement with activities and other relevant qualitative and quantitative information.
- Ensure that a transparent health and safety policy is known and implemented by all stakeholders.
- Ensure that a transparent child protection policy is known and implemented by all stakeholders.
- Carry out an evaluation/review of the support on an annual basis with all stakeholders, including young people.

## EXAMPLE 1: After-School Supports - Dublin North

**Integrated approach:** *In conjunction with a local community development programme, SCP is currently providing After-School Supports for high-risk students. The SCP employs one half-time project worker who, under the management of the local community development programme, provides support programmes for the student target group. The programme provides homework support, activity clubs and personal development programmes.*

**Indoor Games/Sports (Primary):** *The school staff, in consultation with the pupils, plan and implement the games and activities. The club has provided the students with the necessary resources (i.e. games, school premises, facilitators and equipment). Students from the target list participate in the club, which works towards stimulating and nurturing pupil learning.*

*The game clubs have experienced high attendance rates with students eager to participate in all activities. Opportunities to learn through play in a structured environment, emphasising the importance of rules and structures, have been shown to be very effective. Achievement through games and sport has increased pupil confidence and led to improved school attendance.*

**Chess Club (Primary):** *The Chess Club students meet for one session every week in the school. The sessions last for one and a half hours and are facilitated by a Chess Teacher. Approximately 12 students attend the club with a mixture of target and non-target students. The students learn to play Chess in the club leading to their involvement in Chess competitions outside of school.*

*The students have shown a great interest in the club and are keen to participate. They have experienced the importance of guidelines and rules. In addition, the game has helped them to improve their concentration and analytical techniques.*

**Outdoor activities (Primary and Post-Primary):** *The Outdoor Activity Programme works towards encouraging high-risk students on the SCP target list to participate in outdoor activities. The programme is supported and facilitated by school staff and parents on a voluntary basis. The programme works towards developing team-building and socialisation skills plus improving health and fitness. The programme also supports students who are unable to participate due to financial considerations.*

## EXAMPLE 2: After-School Support - Leinster Region

Targeted students are invited to take part. A letter is sent to parents encouraging them to allow their children to attend three days a week during term time. Only those whose parents agree may come to the club. Three teachers are employed to run the club and they plan the day's activities in advance. They remain after school finishes (at 3pm) until the club is over at 4.15pm. They then tidy up the room(s) they have used.

The children are divided into two or three groups depending on numbers and the activity planned. They are given help with their homework every day, if required. They are also given a snack and a drink every day.

On days when the weather is favourable their activity is often outside, e.g. gardening. They have grown flowers, potatoes and turnips in the last year. During bad weather indoor activities, e.g. watching a video, painting a mural, etc., are organised. The children are asked what they would like to do, and where possible, and within reason, they get to do it.

There are rewards at the end of each term based on good behaviour and attendance. These are usually in the form of a day trip to a suitable activity, e.g. cinema, ice-skating, etc.



## MAIN OUTCOMES

- Facilitates improved pupil participation in schools.
- Increases self-esteem and confidence.
- Creates opportunities to be involved in organised fun and recreational activities.
- Improves behaviour in young people targeted by SCP.
- Improves school attendance.
- Increases sense of belonging.
- Allows a young person to be part of active decision-making processes.
- Supports students during Junior Cycle leading to young people being ready and enthusiastic about continuing in Senior Cycle.
- Supports achievement in school activities.
- Improves communication.
- Improves literacy and numeracy.



## 2C HOMEWORK CLUBS

Homework Clubs provide students with a structured environment to complete homework. Research suggests that Homework Clubs are a positive educational support. Recent research (Hennessy & Donnelly) points to the potential for Homework Clubs to offer considerable benefits to children, particularly those living in disadvantaged urban areas. Posner and Vandell (1994) found that Homework Clubs support young people at risk by improving their academic ability, as well as their work habits, emotional adjustment and peer relationships.

### WHAT WORKS? Guidelines towards Best Practice

- Gain parental/guardian consent for inclusion in the Homework Club by way of a signed permission form and explain the workings of the club to parents or guardians.
- Deploy personnel, teachers or project workers to run Homework Clubs. Volunteers may be an option for some projects.
- Offer Homework Clubs on a whole class (or in the case of small schools on a whole-school basis), while ensuring that the targeted students are catered for, so that young people can mix and relax after school.
- Develop a transparent referral system.
- Use the time to help young people with homework. Students may engage in activities, such as computer games, Arts & Crafts, or sport when homework is completed.
- Homework Clubs may also offer a personal development programme, e.g. sports and leisure activities.
- Homework Clubs should offer a food element. A hot meal or snack should be made available prior to students commencing homework.
- Ensure continuity of staff as it allows for good relationships to be built up with students.
- Aim to involve parents or guardians in the running of Homework Clubs as this is a non-threatening environment for them and a good means to see how their children are getting on.
- Provide leadership roles to young people who attend and ensure that tidying up duties are integrated into the programme.
- Be aware that transportation may be a consideration for some young people, particularly in more rural locations. Make provision for transport costs when implementing a Homework Club.
- Ensure a fair and transparent code of conduct. Students can take ownership for the code by being involved in drafting rules for the Homework Club.
- Be aware that some students may need additional support. Ensure that there are personnel available who can provide one-on-one support.
- Ensure that a transparent child protection policy is known and implemented by all stakeholders.

- Ensure that a transparent health and safety policy is known and implemented by all stakeholders.
- A basic profile for every student should be maintained, indicating attendance and general progress.
- Carry out an evaluation of the support on an annual basis with all stakeholders, including young people.

### Example 1: Homework Club - Munster Region

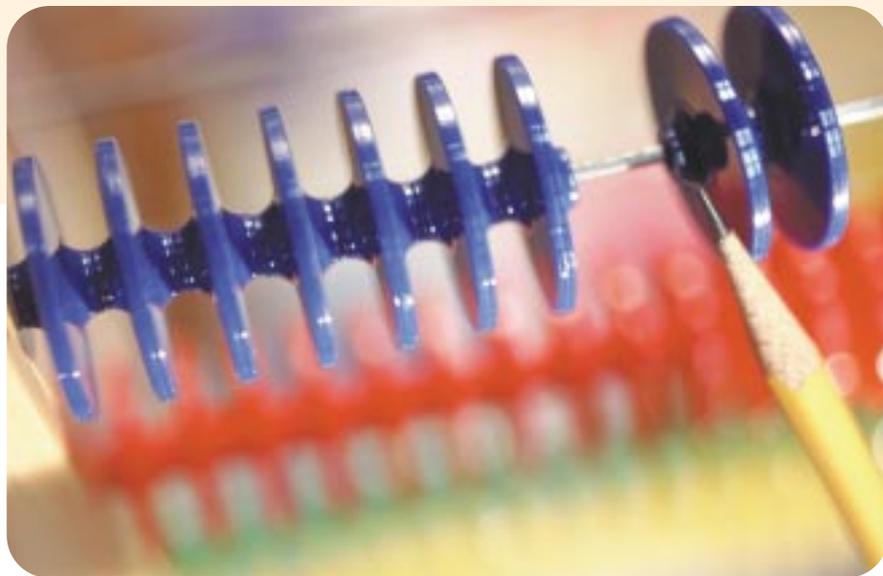
*The Homework After-school programme takes place in three primary schools twice a week and at secondary level, four evenings each week. Learning material is provided to students who have no homework to complete. Study skills are taught at second level. 30 students attend each evening at second level, while ten students at primary level attend. Sports are an integral part of the programme. Students are rewarded at the end of each session for attendance, behaviour and improvement in work.*

### Example 2: Traveller Support Programme (including Homework Club) - Leinster Region

- **Lunch Voucher Scheme:** Lunch vouchers were given to Traveller students to provide nutrition and encourage students to stay in school for afternoon classes. This has improved overall attendance.
- **In-school Literacy classes:** Two students attended literacy classes for one hour and 20 minutes. They made good progress and enjoyed the attention. Their self-esteem improved greatly.
- **Mock Junior Certificate Exam Support:** One student received one-to-one support during exams from his literacy teacher. This gave him the confidence to sit the Junior Certificate, which he passed.
- **Literacy Tuition in the Home:** A Traveller student with very little formal schooling received literacy support. He learned to read words of up to four letters and developed to being able to write simple sentences. He joined a 'Back to Education Initiative' for a short time along with his mother and sisters.
- **Youth Needs Group:** A Community Worker facilitated a meeting in the Community School every week with Traveller students providing support around school-based issues.
- **Lunchtime Club:** Pool and table tennis twice a week fostered fun in a social setting.
- **Homework Club:** Five Traveller students attended the Homework Club 4-5 p.m. Monday to Wednesday. Help with homework, a light snack and classes in Computers, Art and Cookery were provided.
- **One to One Homework Support**
- **August Back to School Support:** SCP Co-ordinator visited homes to check that there were no problems regarding books and uniforms a month before the start of the new school term.
- **Summer Camp for second level Traveller students:** Three Travellers attended.

## MAIN OUTCOMES

- Assists pupils and parents or guardians by providing homework support to pupils.
- Addresses issues of in-school conflict between teachers and pupils over homework.
- Helps raise pupil achievement through increased understanding of school subjects.
- Improves behaviour and social skills.
- Helps young people to unwind in a relaxed setting.
- Allows participants to acquire new skills.
- Improves young people's attitude to school and teachers.
- Improves attendance in school.
- Improves self-esteem.
- Improves literacy and numeracy.



### 3 TRANSFER PROGRAMMES

Transfer Programmes are a key intervention in the School Completion Programme. The transition from primary to post-primary education has been noted as a critical educational step for many children (Smyth, McCoy & Darmody, 2004). Transfer programmes assist in the transition from Primary to Post Primary, they provide information on the new system and structures which the young person will encounter, they prepare the child by encouraging them to identify strategies which will assist them in overcoming the difficulties which may arise, they give a forum to the young person transferring and their parents/guardians to express any fears they may have during this process of change.

#### WHAT WORKS? Guidelines towards Best Practice

- Gain parental/guardian consent for inclusion in the Transfer Programme by way of a signed permission form and explain the workings of the programme to parents or guardians.
- All 6th class primary students should have the opportunity to participate in the programme. Big classes need to be broken into smaller groups to facilitate questions-and-answers sessions.
- A follow-up session in the first month of post-primary school should be part of the programme.
- A tour of the secondary schools that primary students will attend could be organised, where they can meet the Principal, teachers and other staff and familiarise themselves with the layout of the school before starting in September.
- Parents or guardians should take part in an information day/session on transfer. The HSCL Co-ordinator could facilitate elements of the programme that involve parents or guardians.
- Include formal and informal elements in the programme. Informal activities such as swimming, bowling, outdoor activities can put young people at ease and in a position to ask questions about post-primary school.
- Provide a mentoring element to the programme. Students in 5th year and 6th year could participate in the Transfer Programme.
- Consult with other stakeholders such as the HSCL Co-ordinator and the Visiting Teacher for Travellers.
- Be aware that some children may need additional support with transfer. Link with the appropriate agencies to develop Transfer Programmes.
- Ensure that a transparent child protection policy is known and implemented by all stakeholders.
- Ensure that a transparent health and safety policy is known and implemented by all stakeholders.
- On-going evaluations and reviews are essential quality assurance elements in Transfer Programmes.

## EXAMPLE 1: Transfer Programme - North-East Region

*A Transfer Programme for children moving from primary school to second level school was offered to four primary schools. Each child in 6th class was invited to participate regardless of the second level school in which they were enrolled. Overall, 117 students from the four schools participated. The programme ran in each school once a week for one hour over five weeks, concluding with a bowling trip.*

*The course content included an introduction session, a session on rules and consequences, a session on getting to know the new school (i.e. timetables, subjects, etc.), a session on friendship and peer pressure and a concluding session that looked at the memories of primary school and hopes for the future. An evaluation was completed.*

## EXAMPLE 2: Transfer Programme - Dublin Central

*The post-primary school runs a Transfer Programme for all incoming 1st year students. The programme runs over three days when all 1st years come into the school to experience what it will be like to be a pupil in the school. The SCP Co-ordinator, with approximately five teaching staff and four 5th year students, co-ordinate the Transfer Programme.*

*During the first two days of the programme, the students get a tour of the schools facilities, meet some of the staff and other students, and attend classes such as Catering, Woodwork, Art, Computers, Science and PE. They sit together and have their lunch, which enables them to mix socially with their new school peers.*

*On the third day the students assemble at the post-primary school and go on a day trip with the teachers and 5th year students. The day trip in the past was organised by the local Gardaí. This involved bringing the students and staff to a wood in Co. Wicklow, where they took part in a treasure hunt and a river walk.*

*The Transfer Programme attracts 100% attendance and has proven to be very beneficial to both the new students and to the staff in the post-primary school. Another part of the transfer process is organised by the SCP Co-ordinator and the Outdoor Pursuits tutor. Trips are organised periodically throughout the year for all 5th and 6th class feeder primary schools. The trips give the students a chance to see what in-school and extra-curricular activities are on offer to them when they start their post-primary education. The programme gives them an opportunity to ask questions about the school and meet some of the teachers.*



### EXAMPLE 3: Transfer Programme - North-East Region

This transfer programme is divided into a number of modules and is offered to all 6th class students in the cluster area. The process begins in the February prior to enrolment at second level with a whole class work programme in the primary school. This stage extends to the summer and ends with a visit from a senior second level student. In September the SCP staff provide follow-up support.

#### Session 1: Change and Live

- Introduction to Transition Programme, aims, objectives and timetable.
- Visualise first day at school (in groups) and discuss changes that have occurred between then and now.
- Class design questionnaires to be completed by the oldest person they know, which compares life as a 6th class student then and now.

#### Session 2: Being prepared (1)

- Feedback answers to questionnaire from previous week.
- In small groups, discuss what changes the transition to second level school will bring and agree on six important changes.
- Feedback to class and highlight six most common answers.
- Individually complete exercise then divide into groups and feedback common ideas.

#### Session 3: Focus on timetables

- A sample timetable is passed out to each student and discussed.
- Complete activities individually or in groups.
- Read a map of a second level school, focus on new concepts, e.g. tuck shop, canteen, study hall, Woodwork room, Home Economics room.
- Focus on new second level subjects, e.g. CSPE, Home Economics and Business Studies.

#### Session 4: Peer pressure

- Distribute exercise. Facilitator reads out worksheet and questions.
- In small groups, discuss and answer questions.
- Class discussion on story and answers. Groups read out story endings.
- Individuals remember a time when they were in a similar peer pressure situation and reflect on the following questions:
  1. **What happened?**
  2. **What did you do?**
  3. **Are you happy you did that?**
  4. **What would you do in the same situation again?**

#### Session 5

- Prepare for entrance assessment.

#### Session 6

- Swim (informal session).

#### Session 7: Reason behind rules (1)

- Brainstorm rules.
- Decide on one rule and discuss why it is needed.
- With list of rules on boards, groups apply reasons for rules and report back to rest of class.
- Categorise list of rules into Safety, Respect, etc.
- Discuss 'Rules of the Road' book to emphasise need for rules.

### Session 8: Reason behind rules (2)

- Continued from session 7.

### Session 9: Consequences of our choices

- Class decides on four rules for examination.
- Group A discusses breaking a rule and consequences (long and short term).
- Group B discusses keeping a rule and consequences (long and short term).
- Decide on a list of 'Rights in the Classroom' (small groups feedback to class), discuss who is entitled to them and what responsibilities do we all have to ensure those rights are met.
- Prepare questions for next week's visit by secondary school teacher.

### Session 10

- Second level teacher to visit.

### Session 11

- Senior second level student to speak to class about second level school and answer questions from students.

### Session 12

- Swim.

### SEPTEMBER:

- Two to three meetings with students in their new school.



## MAIN OUTCOMES

- Smooths the transfer process from primary to post-primary level for young people.
- Reassures young people that they have the support of teachers and parents.
- Provides contact and familiarity with SCP staff before second level.
- Facilitates peer friendships.
- Creates a positive atmosphere.
- Improves self-confidence.
- Provides a system for quick follow-up if young person fails to transfer.
- Improves integration of targeted children.

## 4 OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUPPORT PROGRAMMES

The provision of Out-of-School supports (i.e. interventions for young people who have left the school system before the statutory age, but are targeted as they may still return to mainstream education), is one of the four central supports of the School Completion Programme. Providing services to these young people is labour-intensive and requires substantial time investment. One-to-one support or small group work will often be required.

### WHAT WORKS? Guidelines towards Best Practice

- Consult with the young people, parents or guardians and the schools prior to students being accepted onto an Out-of-School Programme, so as to fully explore the possibility of the young person returning to mainstream schooling.
- Provide a programme that is flexible to the needs of the young person and his or her family.
- Provide a programme that has an academic core but includes a personal/social development dimension as well.
- Facilitate family involvement, as their participation is a key element of an Out-of-School support.
- Liaise with other agencies in the area (Gardaí, Probation and Welfare services, Social Workers, training agencies, Education Welfare Officers, Youth Services, etc.) in order to provide the best range of options to young people on the programme.
- Develop a transparent referral system.
- Due consideration should be given to appropriate professional staffing.
- Work towards appropriate accreditation for the young person as part of the programme.
- Set goals in consultation with the target group. Young people must feel they have ownership of the programme.
- Create a nurturing and flexible learning environment where enjoyment is an essential element of the programme.
- Implement a tracking system to keep in touch with young people who have left or progressed through the programme.
- Ensure that a transparent child protection policy is known and implemented by all stakeholders.
- Ensure that a transparent health and safety policy is known and implemented by all stakeholders.
- Make planning, review and evaluation an integral part of the programme.

## EXAMPLE 1: Out-of-School Programme - Dublin North

*Prior to a young person being accepted onto the programme, the mainstream school option is fully explored in relation to how it can provide for the on-going academic, personal and social development of the young person.*

**The academic programme:** *Is flexible and tailored to individual needs offering core subjects and cross-curricular work. The focus will be on developing an interest in learning. Pupils will be encouraged to prepare for state examinations with particular emphasis on preparation for FETAC modules.*

**Social/life-skills training:** *Social skills and life-skills training are of vital importance to the success of the programme as it helps the individuals to develop on a personal and social level. This in turn will help strengthen the young person's self-esteem and confidence.*

### **Development on a personal level:**

- *Encouraging self-expression, self-awareness and creativity.*
- *Understanding the importance of individuals being able to express feelings (from anger and frustration to joy and happiness) in an appropriate manner and not in a violent way (violence is often a learned response). This will be encouraged through group discussion, Art and critical evaluation.*
- *Assertiveness is explored through group discussion, encouraging a questioning and challenging attitude, through positive interaction with adults and helping them to stand up for themselves in a non-aggressive manner.*
- *An important element of the training is to help individuals and the group as a unit to take responsibility for their own actions. This is explored through self and group critical evaluation and helping individuals deal with difficult situations in an appropriate manner.*

### **Development on a social level:**

- *Conflict resolution. The individual/group will be encouraged to explore non-aggressive ways of dealing with disputes and arguments.*
- *Development of the individual's communication skills, i.e. listening, speaking and reading. This is done through group discussion and encouraging appropriate individual interaction with the wider environment, for example, day trips.*
- *Developing skills in functioning as part of a group through group activities and day trips.*

### **Other activities**

*It is important for the group to take part in activities that are challenging, enjoyable and fun. These activities will help to build and strengthen relationships between facilitators and participants. A fun trip or activity is organised weekly, e.g. hiking, bowling, visiting the local park, etc.*

### **Advocacy and support**

- *Acknowledging the importance of parental/family support, develop positive contact with the home with house visits once a month for reviews through a Key Worker system.*
- *Support the families' dealings with other agencies e.g. JLOs, Probation and Welfare Service, Social Workers.*
- *To support and accompany the young person with their parents through the Court system.*
- *Progression paths are explored with each young person and their parents.*
- *Support continues for an appropriate period for the young people who move on from the group.*

### Liaising with other agencies

*Foster good relationships with other agencies (Gardaí, Probation and Welfare services, schools, Social Workers, training agencies, Education Welfare Officers, Youth Services) in order to develop a whole system approach.*

### Planning, review and evaluation

*Internal formative planning, review and evaluation procedures are integral.  
The programme mirrors the post-primary academic year:*

#### Tuesday

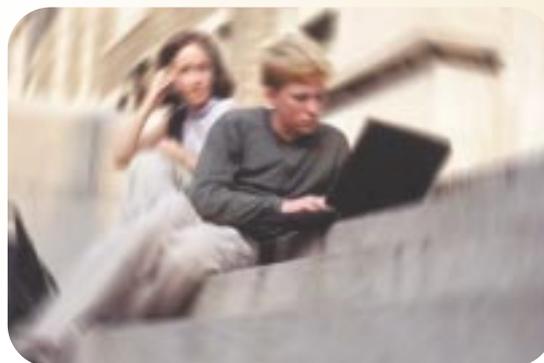
12.00-12.30 *Breakfast/circle time*  
12.30-1.10 *English module*  
1.10-1.20 *Break*  
1.20-2.00 *Maths module*  
2.00-3.00 *Crafts module*

#### Wednesday

12.00-12.15 *Breakfast*  
12.15-12.45 *English module*  
12.45-12.55 *Break*  
12.55-1.30 *Maths module*  
1.30-3.00 *Cookery and food module*

#### Thursday

10.00-12.00 *Sports Activities/FETAC modules*  
12.00-12.30 *Lunch*  
12.30-1.10 *English module*  
1.10-1.20 *Break*  
1.20-2.00 *Maths module*  
2.00-3.00 *Career/Personal development module*



## MAIN OUTCOMES

- Improves young person's self-esteem and confidence.
- Develops a renewed interest in learning.
- Engages home, school, youth and community services in the young person's education and development.
- Leads to improved levels of participation, attendance and achievement.
- Allows young people to have more control over their lives.
- Facilitates a return to mainstream education and training.



## 5 HOLIDAY PROGRAMMES

Holiday Supports are an integral part of the School Completion Programme. These supports are offered in the knowledge that decisions not to return to school may be made during the long holiday periods. Offering young people at risk of leaving school early continual supports during the holiday periods can help develop a positive attitude to learning and a deeper sense of attachment to school, thus increasing the desire to remain within the educational system.

### WHAT WORKS? Guidelines towards Best Practice

- Obtain permission from parents or guardians prior to young people participating in Holiday Supports.
- A whole-school approach to Holiday Supports may be advisable to avoid stigmatisation of targeted young people.
- Consult with other agencies in the local area that may be already providing Holiday Supports. Youth Services, in particular, are well established providers of Holiday Supports.
- Avoid duplication of existing services.
- Where no other Holiday Supports exist in the local area, consult widely with statutory and non-statutory agencies before setting up an appropriate support.
- Develop a transparent and coherent referral process.
- Encourage parents or guardians to offer their time during holiday periods. Ensure that parents or guardians and other volunteers are given appropriate training prior to their involvement in Holiday Supports.
- A number of experienced individuals are required to run a Holiday Support Programme including youth workers, teachers, specialists (e.g. Drama, Art, Music) and volunteers.
- Ensure that facilities are appropriate for Holiday Supports. School grounds and youth/community centres may be appropriate environments.
- Ensure that a transparent health and safety policy is known and implemented by all stakeholders.
- Ensure a flexible programme that concentrates on personal and social development elements and literacy and numeracy support. Include fun activities, which young people may not otherwise have an opportunity to experience.
- Consult with sporting bodies as they may be in a position to offer places to at-risk young people in their Summer Programmes.
- Ensure a thorough planning stage prior to implementing Holiday Supports.
- Be aware of the need for transport services in more isolated rural areas.
- Ensure that supports are age-appropriate.
- Ensure that all activities are covered by public liability insurance/SCP insurance.

- Ensure in advance an appropriate costing mechanism whereby subsidies are available to targeted young people in a discretionary manner.
- Ensure that a transparent child protection policy is known and implemented by all stakeholders.
- Make planning, review and evaluation an integral part of the programme.

### EXAMPLE 1 - Holiday Programme - Leinster Region

*Sports/Arts and Crafts and other fun activities are organised for all 4-16 year olds in the area. Outings are organised for older groups and two family days are organised for the community. An integrated approach is adopted where funding and expertise is pooled. Volunteers are an important part of the programme and they receive training before the programme begins. Each group is co-ordinated by one of the agencies involved - SCP co-ordinated the Tweenies (5-6), Tigers (6-7) and 16 year olds.*

### EXAMPLE 2: Holiday Programme - Leinster Region

#### PARKS TENNIS

**Action:** Tennis coaching - Parks Tennis Ireland. Parks Tennis is a programme supported by Nestlé Ireland, the Irish Sports Council, FÁS and various local authorities.

**Timeframe:** July 2004.

**Facilitators:** Trained tennis coaches.

**Participants:** 66 children between the ages of 6 and 17.

**Work plan:** Parks Tennis invites boys and girls to learn new tennis skills by experienced tennis coaches. In order to maximise the availability of Parks Tennis to children attending schools in this SCP cluster, it was arranged that the coaches would spend two hours from 9-10am and 10-11am at a tennis course in a particular housing estate where many targeted students reside. Most of the children living in this estate were in a position to attend daily sessions.

**Advertising:** The summer of 2004 was the first time that Parks Tennis became available for students in this area. As a result, it was of huge importance that information on the availability of coaching reached as many children and parents as possible. The SCP project took on the responsibility for advertising and recruiting children for Parks Tennis. The official Parks Tennis brochures and posters were distributed throughout the community in post offices, community centres and local shops. Parents were of great help in disseminating the information.

**Cost:** The registration fee to take part in Parks Tennis was €15. SCP offered free places to approximately 30 target group children.

#### SUMMER FUN 2004

**Action:** Summer Fun is a countrywide Arts festival for young people (5-18 years). The programme works on the principle of partnership between the Arts Department of the County Council and communities throughout the area.

**Location:** Two schools in the area.

**Facilitators:** Local artists.

**Participants:** 80 children from participating SCP schools.

**Work plan:** Fun with fabric, Ready Steady, Write, KA-POW! How to draw comics, funky fabric painting, explore drama, discover drawing.

**Cost:** All workshops are free of charge. The County Council Arts Department cover the cost of paying the artists.

**Advertising:** The SCP project promoted Summer Fun in the local communities. As both areas were new hosts to the Summer Fun festival, widespread advertising was of huge importance.

### **SOCCER CAMP**

**Action:** Soccer camp.

**Location:** Participating post-primary school grounds.

**Timeframe:** One week in August.

**Facilitators:** FAI Soccer Coach.

**Participants:** 64 participants from participating primary and post-primary SCP schools.

**Work plan:** 10am-12.30pm 8-11 years; 1-3.30pm 12-14 years.

**Transport:** In order that as many children as possible could derive enjoyment from the Soccer Camp, buses were arranged to take children from both groups to and from the camp location. Each parent was sent a letter indicating that a bus would be arranged.

**Cost:** The cost of the Soccer Camp was €10 per child. The cost of this was subsidised by contributions from the Housing Department of the County Council, which ensured that a greater number of targeted children from housing estates could attend various summer activities.

**Advertising:** In local shops and post offices with the help of local parents.



### **EXAMPLE 3: Holiday Programme - South-East Region**

**Teenage youth project:** A summer programme that runs for one week during July. 50 teenagers aged 13-16 years take part in a range of activities including drug awareness, racism awareness, African drumming, sports and day trips.

**Target group:** 45 participants including referrals from Social Workers, SCP Co-ordinator, Youth at-risk worker and Community worker for the Traveller community. Targeting of teenagers deemed to be at risk (early school leaver, in trouble with the law, etc.) typically would not have access to such a programme.

**Timeframe of programme:** One week of activities/workshops at the end of July/beginning of August, finishing with an overnight day trip. Monthly planning meetings (April to June) and then weekly meetings.

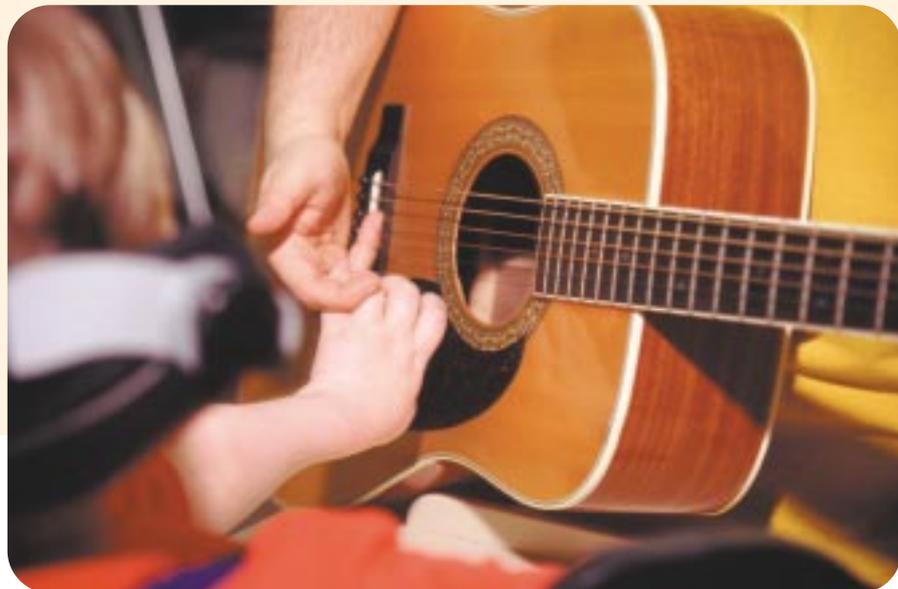
**Partners in the programme:** SCP, Regional Youth Services, Community Services.

#### **Evaluation and monitoring procedures:**

- Evaluation meetings are held at the end of each day with all leaders.
- Participants are consulted with regard to areas of interest and programme content in advance of the programme.
- Overall evaluation with all workers from the various organisations and the voluntary workers to review the programme, issues arising and make recommendations for next year's programme.

## MAIN OUTCOMES

- Improves participation of parents or guardians in education.
- Encourages targeted children to participate in a range of other supports.
- Improves engagement with and attachment to school.
- Develops happier young people.
- Improves social skills.
- Reduces incidence of criminal offences during the duration of the programme.
- Provides an opportunity for experiences that otherwise young people would never receive.
- Improves self-esteem and confidence.
- Allows for a positive way to spend spare time.
- Facilitates better relationships between SCP personnel and targeted young people prior to academic year.
- Provides an opportunity for young people to participate in decision-making, planning, organising and evaluation.





## 6 MENTORING PROGRAMMES

Mentoring Programmes are provided in SCP as a method to support young people throughout the education process. Mentoring can be provided from adult to young person or from young person to young person depending on their needs. While peer mentoring is more common, teachers, parents or members of the community may act as mentors for the young person. The purpose of mentoring is to facilitate learning, growth and development of the student.

### WHAT WORKS? Guidelines towards Best Practice

- Obtain permission from parents or guardians for young people to participate in the Mentoring Programme.
- Planning is key in the delivery of a Mentoring Programme. Ensure that all stakeholders are trained in mentoring techniques.
- Ensure flexibility in the programme by providing mentoring support on a one-to-one basis and/or on a group work basis.
- Mentoring is not a guiding, steering and controlling process. The students will benefit more if mentoring is seen to be a nurturing process where the students take responsibility for their own decisions and actions.
- Create a transparent and flexible referral system and allow room for self-referral.
- Teachers are an integral part of the mentoring/pastoral support systems in schools. Their participation in Mentoring Programmes should be negotiated with relevant stakeholders.
- Create a programme in a trusting and caring environment that can deal with issues such as self-esteem, bullying, poor academic/social ability, behaviour problems, anger management and abuse.
- Where parents are involved, work with HSCL Co-ordinators in putting in place a Mentoring Programme.
- Reward mentors, particularly student mentors, for their time.
- Regularly review the mentoring process.
- Problems with incompatibility should be identified as early as possible. Mentors must not become involved in student disciplinary matters.
- Put in place an agreement that neither party abandons the mentoring relationship without prior discussion.
- If issues of a delicate personal nature arise, document and report it to the designated person immediately.
- Establish appropriate administrative procedures.
- Ensure that a transparent child protection policy is known and implemented by all relevant stakeholders.
- Ensure that a transparent health and safety policy is known and implemented by all stakeholders.
- Make planning, review and evaluation an integral part of the programme.

### EXAMPLE 1: Mentoring Programme - North-West Region

*The post-primary school has employed a mentor who had previous experience in this role. Mentoring is one-to-one, generally with referrals coming from staff. Students can also self-refer. The mentor tracks progress of students and reviews their need to attend a mentor. The programme is offered to 56 targeted pupils, but the programme is available to any student whose circumstances change.*

### EXAMPLE 2: Mentoring Programme - North-West Region

**Step 1:** *Young people are first approached in 3rd year when the Programme Co-ordinator meets the entire class to introduce the idea of mentoring and talk about their own experiences of being mentored. The young people who are interested in being a mentor are then asked to fill in an application form.*

**Step 2:** *Training takes place for all these students over three days in June. Topics include effective listening skills, scenarios addressing their anxiety of being a mentor, confidentiality, planning activities and meetings. At this stage the young people are asked to name what supports they would like in school to allow them to be mentors. This is negotiated with the school in the autumn. Mentors and 1st years are grouped.*

**Step 3:** *Meeting with 1st years. Setting up activities including Sport, Art, Drama, etc. Support is given to mentors once a week where they meet the Project Co-ordinators to address any issues that may have arisen with himself or herself or the 1st year group.*

**Step 4:** *Review and evaluation at Halloween, Christmas, Easter and end of year.*

**Step 5:** *Recognition night for mentors. Plan training for next year.*



### EXAMPLE 3: Mentoring Programme - Munster Region

*The Mentoring Programme operates in the post-primary school. The programme targets 54 young people at risk from 1st year to 6th year. A link teacher co-ordinates and implements the support programme within the school. 14 teachers voluntarily agree to mentor a number of pupils each, particularly 1st years to 5th years. They meet with the target group once a week to check how they are getting on, if they have their books, items for school, PE gear, etc. They also intervene, where possible, around discipline issues, making contact with parents and families as required. Attendance and achievement are also monitored. Every two weeks this group meets with the local co-ordinator and link teacher over lunch to discuss progress and issues.*

### EXAMPLE 4: Mentoring Programme - Dublin-West

*All 5th years in the post-primary schools are given a comprehensive application form to become a mentor, and then called for a 15 minute interview. In late September of every year, 12 students are selected to become mentors. Once selected, they partake in a ten-week programme provided by SCP, the youth services and a local youth initiative. Training includes listening skills, group development work, confidentiality, practical coping skills and leadership abilities. Ten mentors are then selected to work with 20 target group children from 1st year.*

*The programme provides a meal for at-risk 1st years and a social platform where they feel comfortable expressing anxieties about being in a new school. It is an informal gathering that is provided to encourage attendance at school while addressing the underlying causes of non-attendance.*

## MAIN OUTCOMES

- Improves self-esteem.
- Assists in academic progress.
- Facilitates peer acceptance.
- Reduces anxiety when in school.
- Improves relationships with teaching staff.
- Creates a positive attitude to school.
- Reduces behavioural problems.
- Decreases absenteeism.
- Helps young people to identify goals.
- Creates an environment where younger students become comfortable around older students.
- Shows students that schools can be caring.
- Facilitates team-building.

## 7 LEARNING SUPPORT PROGRAMMES

Learning Support can be defined as additional forms of assistance to young people in need of academic support, particularly in the areas of literacy and numeracy. In-school support is one of the four main supports offered in SCP to young people at risk of early school leaving.

### WHAT WORKS? Guidelines towards Best Practice

- Consult with Principals, teachers and care staff to identify the target group.
- Obtain parental/guardian consent before putting in place Learning Support.
- Work with School Management and Learning Support Teachers in identifying the needs of the targeted students. Employ additional personnel where necessary to complement the school's existing Learning Resources and to further extend the supports and provision for the targeted students.
- Provide Learning Support to targeted students, as required.
- Work collaboratively with the relevant school personnel to devise individualised programmes to meet the needs of the targeted students. Establish a set of support strategies that may be delivered on an individual basis, in small group tuition or in a team teacher setting.
- On-going review and progress reports should be filled in on a daily or weekly basis.
- Work in conjunction with the existing school supports and resources, e.g. JCSP and LCA.
- Provide flexibility in learning support modules to explore issues such as confidence and self-esteem.
- Make goals and targets part of the process and communicate improvements to young people, parents or guardians and other teachers.
- Use other activities such as Sport, Science, ICT, Art and Drama to engage young people and create a positive environment to tackle academic elements of the curriculum.
- Ensure that enough time is allocated to each young person.
- If identified, support young people with other subjects.
- Incorporate the use of mentors or other pastoral care supports into the programme.
- Agree goals and targets outlining the Learning Support Worker and young person's commitment to the programme.
- Ensure that a transparent child protection policy is known and implemented by all relevant stakeholders.
- Ensure that a transparent health and safety policy is known and implemented by all stakeholders.
- Make planning, review and evaluation an integral part of the programme.

### EXAMPLE 1: Learning Support Programme - Munster Region

*Target pupils have time allocations throughout the week (some daily) when they work in either small groups or individually with programme staff on both academic and social/personal aspects of their schooling that need development. Target setting is used alongside review in order to demonstrate/reinforce improvement/development in the child.*

### EXAMPLE 2: Learning Support Programme - Dublin North Region

*A teacher takes a small group of pupils for extra support in subjects such as English and Maths. These students will have shown difficulty coping in class. The teacher has an assigned room, takes students for a 40-minute session (i.e. one class period) to work on their weak subjects. With some students, it is a case of boosting their confidence in their abilities. The teacher is employed for 10 hours a week to work with the students.*

### EXAMPLE 3: Learning Support Programme - Munster Region

**Primary level:** *One teacher (14 hours) divides her time between three primary schools. The team identifies pupils who are struggling and gives them support. The support is an integration of academic and social and often uses the multiple intelligences approach. Often the work is grounded in the experience of some practical activity. The teacher is trained in Reading Recovery and while she is not implementing the programme officially, she draws on her skills-base in the area to assess, and then implement, an appropriate programme to help children move forward in their work. Mostly support is given to targeted children only, but sometimes it is more effective to take a small class group where peer mentoring is used. This is very effective as it not only allows the small group to get extra support but also means the class teacher is able to give better attention to other pupils in the class while the small group is being withdrawn.*

**Post-primary:** *Students are withdrawn from the mainstream classroom for support. Students get help from a number of staff: project worker, two volunteers, and two elder students. These personnel work as a team in two schools as they are 20 miles apart. Mostly Maths and English are covered, but also any subject that is causing difficulty. Some students are slowly integrated back into class. The programme works on the basis that it is supporting the subject teacher in their role, so it requires active co-operation from the relevant subject teachers.*

## MAIN OUTCOMES

- Improves self-esteem.
- Improves participation in class/school.
- Develops effective learning and study methods.
- Improves retention in school.
- Improves examination results.
- Provides access to textbooks and literature via literacy supports.
- Improves attendance at school.
- Builds positive relationships in school.
- Integrates students into the mainstream classroom.
- Raises literacy and numeracy standards.
- Improves behaviour.
- Improves transfer to post-primary.
- Allows for more independent learning.

## 8 SOCIAL AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

Programmes and supports that focus on the personal and social development of young people are central to all interventions offered in the School Completion Programme be it In-school, After-school, Out-of-school or Holiday provision. While school completion is the main aim of the initiative, it is generally agreed throughout the programme that this cannot be achieved unless formal education provides positive social and personal development education to young people at risk of early school leaving.

### WHAT WORKS? Guidelines towards Best Practice

- Obtain permission from parents or guardians for young people to participate in the Social and Personal Development Programme.
- Consult with other statutory and non-statutory agencies in your local area that may be already offering Social and Personal Development Programmes.
- Work in collaboration with school managements in devising appropriate Social and Personal Development Programmes for the target students.
- Source experts to put in place specific supports e.g. Drama, Music, Art.
- Programmes should be offered to both targeted students and non-targeted students in order to facilitate improved peer relationships.
- Put in place programmes that are age-appropriate.
- Ensure that the setting is young-person friendly.
- Ensure that personnel are trained in both formal and informal techniques for working with young people.
- Devise a transparent code of conduct in consultation with your target group (may include points relating to fair play, listening to each other and teachers, agreeing fair disciplinary procedures and teasing).
- Choose activities and programmes that play to the strengths of participating young people. It is important that young people find an activity where they feel they can achieve success.
- Put in place a reward system for good behaviour and effort.
- Deploy mentors and advocates as part of the programme.
- Where appropriate, design an individual programme targeting the children's needs, for example, behavioural difficulties, attendance and anger management.
- Ensure that a transparent child protection policy is known and implemented by all stakeholders.
- Ensure that a transparent health and safety policy is known and implemented by all stakeholders.
- Incorporate planning, review and evaluation stages when putting in place Social and Personal Development Programmes.

## **EXAMPLE 1: Social and Personal Development Programme - Catering for Success - Dublin North Region**

*This support was implemented in collaboration with Fáilte Ireland. A group of 15 students from one of the target primary schools were chosen for the pilot of this programme. Fáilte Ireland developed a six-week programme, during which the students learn the essentials of cooking, presentation of food, safety in the kitchen and food hygiene. This course is held in the Fáilte Ireland Training Centre.*

*Each week the students are brought to the training centre where they get dressed in their kitchen uniforms. They then have breakfast together. Next they go to one of the lecture rooms where they have a short lesson in one of the topics mentioned above. They then go to the kitchen for their practical lesson. Each week they can bring home the food that they prepare.*

*The course runs for six weeks, with each session lasting three and a half hours. In the final week, family members of the students are invited into Fáilte Ireland, where the students prepare and serve a three-course meal to them. A presentation ceremony follows this, where students are presented with certificates to mark their achievement in completing the course.*

*Each programme caters for 15 students. The project attempts to mix the group between targeted students and others, as this avoids stigmatisation for targeted students. Of this 15, approximately ten are targeted students. The project chooses the other five from students who are in need of intervention, but who did not make the target list.*

## **EXAMPLE 2: Social and Personal Development Programme - Dublin North Region**

*A garden is available at lunchtime and after-school for students. During school-time, it can be used as a time-out for disruptive students. Anything grown can be kept or sold. Profits are divided in proportion to the amount of work done. Produce can be used by the Home Economics and Science Teachers for demonstrations.*

*The necessary equipment and resources were already in the school but had not been used for approximately five years. Initially, easy-to-grow vegetables and herbs were grown as an experiment. It has now expanded and interest has grown in the project. There are no qualified 'experts', so everything is done through trial and error. It benefits the students when something they plant may not grow. It teaches them the value of experimentation.*

## **EXAMPLE 3: Social and Personal Development Programme - North-West Region**

*The game of Draughts is a popular pastime in the area. One school requested the SCP Co-ordinator to get a Draughts Coach to encourage the pastime as a lunchtime activity during the winter months. A coach was recruited from the local Draughts League and the six-week initiative that ensued was successful. The other schools became aware of the initiative at a management meeting and started the initiative in their own schools. As all six primary schools were involved, an inter-schools competition was suggested. An inter-school competition, in association with the local Draughts Association and the Gardaí was held, which was very successful. A team of 12 (two from each school) played a challenge match against another school at the All-Ireland Draughts Final in a joint SCP and Draughts Association initiative.*

*There are at present two Draughts tutors involved. One is a parent and part-time secretary in the school who has an interest and knowledge of draughts; the other is the Draughts Education Officer of the Draughts League, who supplied teaching boards and other aids.*

## EXAMPLE 4: Social and Personal Development Programme - Leinster Region

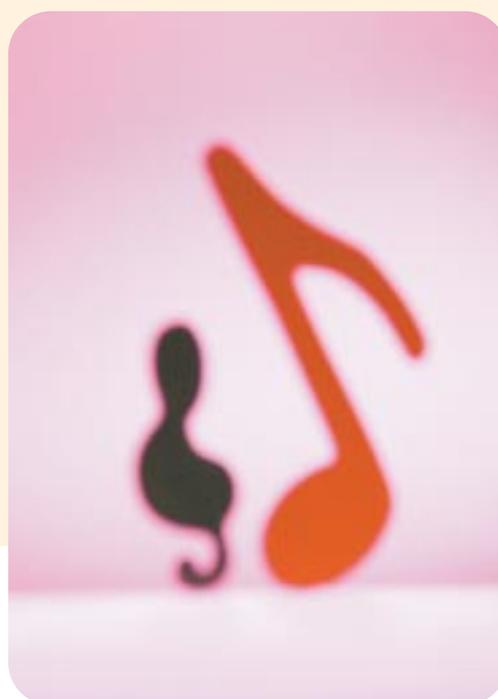
*This SCP has a music programme in its cluster of schools that involves in excess of 260 students. This programme has three components to it: an instrumental programme, a percussion programme and a choral programme. The SCP wished to support the introduction of music more formally in its other feeder primary schools. The SCP sought permission from the Department of Education and Science to purchase instruments with a view to creating a bank of instruments for pupils who would not have the opportunity of participating in a music project otherwise. SCP worked in collaboration with the Arts Department of the local County Council. The SCP consulted and engaged with a qualified Music Teacher who drew up a plan for the primary and post-primary schools.*

*It soon became apparent that a policy needed to be put in place to ensure that the music project reflected the aims and objectives of the SCP. To this end, the Local Management Group elected a sub-committee to take on the task of writing up a mission statement and the aims and objectives of the music programme.*

*By introducing music through performing, listening and composing it is intended to positively enhance each child's educational journey through school. Pupils begin to understand what music is made up of and how it is put together.*

### MAIN OUTCOMES

- Allows for the acquisition of new life skills.
- Develops a sense of achievement.
- Improves self-esteem and confidence.
- Facilitates a more positive attitude to school.
- Improves behaviour.
- Improves attendance and punctuality.
- Increases contact time with young people at risk.
- Re-affirms the value of teamwork.
- Encourages communication.
- Increases participation in school activities.
- Improves parental involvement.





## 9 PARENTAL PROGRAMMES AND FAMILY SUPPORT

Family Support and Parental Programmes are provided through the School Completion Programme in recognition of the fact that families must also be supported in the effort to retain young people at risk of early school leaving in the school system. Family Support aims to encourage and empower families to participate more fully in their children's educational development. Family Support Workers employ a holistic support system, working with the family to identify their needs and concerns. Family Support Workers liaise closely with HSCL Co-ordinators and other relevant family support agencies.

### WHAT WORKS? Guidelines towards Best Practice

- Put in place a referral system that incorporates the recommendations of external agencies, e.g. Social Services, Health Boards, Gardaí, and Family Services.
- Work in conjunction with Home School Community Liaison Co-ordinators who will have built up strong relationships with families in the local area.
- Family visitation may be part of the remit of a Family Support Worker. Good practice guidelines for family/home visits need to be drawn up and implemented in order to create the structures and conditions necessary for the establishment of a trusting and respectful relationship with the family.
- Deploy the skills of Family Support Workers to actively listen, support, get to know and encourage the family.
- The Family Support Worker needs to clarify his or her role with the family.
- Undertake a process of needs identification and goal setting with the parents/guardians and child on a consultative basis.
- Model good practice, e.g. homework support in the home.
- Utilise the skills of Family Support Workers to act as advocates between families and school personnel.
- Advise on support services available to the family; build up strong relationships with external stakeholders.
- Review progress with the care team on a regular basis.
- Review work with the families on a regular basis.
- Focus specific attention on the families of targeted young people but be open to supporting other families that might be in crisis.
- In conjunction with HSCL Co-ordinator and other agencies, make provision for activities that involve parents or guardians and targeted young people.
- Ensure that the individual working with families has the necessary qualifications and the ability to build up trusting relationships with families and young people.
- Ensure that a transparent child protection policy is known and implemented by all stakeholders.

- Ensure that a transparent health and safety policy is known and implemented by all stakeholders.
- Incorporate planning, review and evaluation stages when devising Family Support and Parental Programmes.

### EXAMPLE 1: Family Support - Dublin North Region

*A Family Support Worker, who is seconded to the SCP from the Northern Area Health Board, conducts family support. This role is crucial to the programme as the Family Support Worker is the key link to the families on the target list. He works with families who need some extra support. The schools, local agencies or a member of the project team, would normally refer these. The aim of this support is to increase attendance at school by helping families get on a stable footing.*

*After initially visiting the family and spending time with them, the Family Support Worker assesses the needs of the family. This is carried out in conjunction with the family. The job of family support is then about supporting the family in meeting their goals and needs. Very often, this can be about linking them with the appropriate services. The Family Support Worker regularly links with local agencies including Social Services, Health Boards, Dublin City Council, Gardaí, Turas and Springboard Family Services.*

### EXAMPLE 2: Family Support - Leinster Region

*Schools that do not have the HSCL scheme identified the provision of a home visitation service as a priority for SCP. SCP's Home Visitor works four and a half days a week for the four primary schools with families targeted by the schools. She also works very closely and meets regularly with HSCL Co-ordinators. Families are shared between SCP and HSCL. No family is visited by any more than one school visitor, even though they might have children attending three different schools.*

*Needs raised by the family are met where possible. Very often this involves SCP contacting other agencies - for example, Health Board, Money Advice Budgetary Service, Vincent de Paul, Juvenile Liaison Officers, Probation Services. The children of these families are included in SCP activities - In-school, After-school and during holidays. By meeting regularly with the parent or guardian, feedback is gathered on how they view their children's progress, as well as obstacles in the way of their child benefiting from his or her education.*

*Schools send information home through the School Completion Home Visitor.*

*Principals have openly admitted changing their attitude to some families as a result of the knowledge gained through this activity. Schools have facilitated teachers to meet with these parents with the Home Visitor on a day other than those set aside for Parent-Teacher meetings.*

*The Home Visitor alongside the other HSCL Co-ordinator have organised a wide variety of activities for parents, e.g. going out to lunch, parenting courses, cookery, keep-fit, mother & toddler. The South Eastern Health Board has funded the Mother-Toddler group.*

### EXAMPLE 3: Family Support - Leinster Region

*Family support counselling: This SCP has employed a qualified Family Therapist to split her time between the schools. She meets students and their families in each school in a room set aside for Family Support Counselling. One integral part of this programme is that the therapist not only meets with the young person, but with their families as well:*

- 1. Teachers, school staff, and/or community people speak to the Principal or HSCL Co-ordinators about a student or family that they think could benefit from family support counselling.*
- 2. The Principal, HSCL Co-ordinator and SCP Local Co-ordinator liaise with our Family Therapist on a regular basis about referring new clients.*
- 3. Once the student name is passed onto the Family Therapist, the therapist rings their parent or guardian to ask permission to meet with that student, and to schedule a time to meet the whole family or just a few family members.*
- 4. The Family Therapist then engages the student in conversation as well as many, if not all of the family members. The Family Therapist meets with these people on a weekly basis.*
- 5. The Family Therapist rings the student or their family to remind them of their appointment times.*
- 6. At the end of the school year, the Family Therapist conducts a wind-down session and talks to students and their families about the necessity of meeting the following school year.*

### EXAMPLE 4: Mother and Child Programme - Dublin Central

*Target families and other families are invited to a group once a week for eight weeks. A Family Therapist and a team worker run it.*

**12-1.30 pm:** *Mothers meet, have a snack and hold a discussion on family life, parenting, etc.*

**1.30-2.30 pm:** *Mother and child do a fun/creative activity - Art, Cookery, etc.*

*On the last day a treasure hunt and picnic are held. Photos are taken and certificates are awarded. The programme provides non-threatening ways for families to bond and help to facilitate parents getting additional services such as family support.*

## MAIN OUTCOMES

- Improves participation of targeted young people in school life.
- Improves attendance.
- Creates a positive impact on families.
- Generates a sense of stability in a young person's life.
- Improves self-esteem for families and children.
- Improves school's attitude to families.
- Provides a chance for parents to overcome educational obstacles.
- Facilitates the development of new strategies to deal with change.
- Empowers the family.

## 10 THERAPEUTIC SUPPORT

Some young people supported by the School Completion Programme present with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Where emotional and behavioural difficulties are impeding young people's progress through the education process, SCP puts in place interventions and programmes to assist them.

### WHAT WORKS? Guidelines towards Best Practice

- Ensure that parents or guardians sign consent forms prior to young people engaging in Therapeutic Supports.
- Prior to putting in place a Therapeutic Support, identify the needs of pupils in the participating schools. Different supports may be required for different young people, e.g. on-going one-to-one counselling, behaviour modification programmes, reality therapy and group work.
- Work in collaboration with school managements and with the existing school resources in devising appropriate Therapeutic Supports for the target students.
- Work in conjunction with the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), the relevant Health Boards and other community and voluntary services in order not to duplicate services.
- Put in place a referral system that caters to all age groups. Allow flexibility for self-referral.
- Devise formal feedback mechanisms for Principals, teachers, parents or guardians and young people.
- Ensure a dedicated space is created in schools for the purpose of counselling and time out for disruptive students.
- Ensure that teachers, Principals, parents or guardians and young people are informed of positive improvements and developments.
- Provide space in the programme for meetings between teachers and counselling staff to discuss and advise on how to handle the emotional and behavioural difficulties of young people in their classroom.
- Ensure that Therapeutic Supports are delivered to those young people who need them most.
- Make provision in the budget for child and adolescent counselling supports.
- Liaise with HSCL Co-ordinators as a bridging link between the parents or guardians, counselling service and young people.
- Ensure that one individual has responsibility for making appointments, relaying appointment dates and sending out progress reports between counsellors, young people and parents or guardians.
- Ensure that young people, counsellors, parents or guardians and any other personnel involved in the support, agree ground rules for participation in Therapeutic Supports.

- More in-depth therapeutic and counselling work should be carried out in appropriate settings. Ensure that referrals can be made to agencies/therapists working outside school settings.
- Ensure that there is a protocol/procedure for following up on any issues that may arise for young people as a result of Therapeutic Support.
- Ensure that an evaluation involving all stakeholders is carried out on an annual basis.
- Ensure that a transparent child protection policy is known and implemented by all stakeholders.
- Ensure that a transparent health and safety policy is known and implemented by all stakeholders.

### EXAMPLE 1: Therapeutic Support - Dublin Central

*A Counsellor was contracted and five pupils were identified. The Counsellor made contact with the pupils, their parents or guardians and teachers and work began on revamping the counselling space. The work was co-ordinated by the Counsellor and included the active involvement of five pupils. This approach gave pupils a sense of ownership of the space and a sense of responsibility and pride in its appearance. The Counsellor collects the boys from the classroom and brings them to his room, and when finished returns them back to the classroom. The Counsellor is on-site for three full days each week. Staff and pupils treat the Counsellor very well, with staff looking for advice from him in regard to the pupils. The main aims of the support include:*

- *Improving the child's self-image, self-esteem and confidence through the provision of positive therapeutic attention.*
- *Providing the empathetic space and support the child needs to be in touch with and express feelings of anger, sadness, grief, etc.*
- *Helping the teachers and parents better understand the difficulties the child is dealing with and understand the underlying causes of the particular patterns of behaviour.*
- *Enabling the child to develop better social skills and the coping mechanisms needed to reduce the incidents of inappropriate behaviour.*
- *Building caring and supportive relationships (with appropriate boundaries) with children, parents and teachers and in doing so, offering a model of healthy human relations.*

### EXAMPLE 2: Therapeutic Support - Dublin Central

*It was decided to employ the services of an Art Therapist to deliver one-to-one art therapy to those target students at primary level who have shown to be most at risk of leaving school early. The Art Therapist attends both schools on a weekly basis and works with two students regularly. Those students who have displayed extreme behavioural concerns and an inability to learn within a classroom setting have been targeted. Within the session, students are encouraged to explore their behaviour, family environment and their attitude to school through the use of Art as a medium.*

*The Art Therapist draws up weekly reports to the school on the progress of each child. The aim of such intervention is for the child to slowly integrate back into the classroom to become less of a disruptive force, build more positive relationships with peers and generally develop a more lasting attitude to school life.*

### EXAMPLE 3: Therapeutic Supports - Dublin North Region

All of the schools in this SCP have some form of Therapeutic support. The supports put in place at primary level include play therapy, drama therapy and music therapy. At post-primary level, the following services are provided: Key Worker system, in-school reality therapy and an out-of-school counselling service.

#### Primary school system

The project employs two Drama Therapists and one Music Therapist on a sessional basis. The Therapists receive referrals from school personnel and, from time to time, SCP project staff. The Therapists then discuss the referrals with the class teacher and from these meetings makes an informed decision as to which children they will work with. The Therapist then contacts the parents and arranges a meeting to discuss their child and to gain consent to work with the child. The Therapist then meets with the young people and decides what type of therapeutic intervention is most suitable, i.e. group or individual. The Therapist meets with teachers and parents three times throughout the year and reviews the child's progress.

#### Second level

**Key working:** SCP staff currently work with eight young people (three boys and five girls) on a one-to-one basis. School personnel make referrals. The young people identified for key working are generally having difficulties managing day-to-day school life and require practical support. The Key Worker meets with each child for a one-hour session once a week throughout the academic school year. The session content varies from child to child. The following is a breakdown of topics covered:

- Conflict resolution.
- Personal hygiene.
- Time management.
- Goal setting.
- Self-esteem.
- School issues, i.e. preparing for class, uniforms, and diaries.
- Transfer from primary to second level.

Through these sessions the Key Worker acts as a support for the pupil and also liaises with other relevant personnel who affect the child's educational experience particularly parents, HSCL and class teachers. The work undertaken by the Key Worker is reviewed after each session to ensure that key working is the appropriate intervention for the pupil. If the Key Worker and line manager feel that the child is presenting with issues that require interventions of a therapeutic nature, they can refer the child to the school Counsellor.





**In-school counselling:** *Young people who have more complex issues are referred to the trained Reality Therapist. The Counsellor worked with 25 students in two schools last year. The Counsellor meets with the student once a week on a one-to-one basis. Each session is scheduled to last 40 minutes. The session content varies from child to child. Some of the emerging issues include:*

- *Difficulties experienced at home and in school.*
- *Low self-esteem.*
- *Anti-social behaviour.*
- *Anxieties and fears.*
- *Difficulties in transferring from primary to second level.*
- *Poor self-image and self-worth.*

*Many students who attend weekly sessions reach a point where they are ready for in-depth work, which from a therapeutic point of view is not appropriate in the school environment. These young people are referred to an outside counselling support where they can avail of deeper counselling work. The services currently available to this SCP are as follows:*

- *Barnardos Springboard.*
- *Clanwilliam House Counselling Service.*
- *Finglas Counselling Service.*
- *Castleknock Child Guidance and Family Service.*

*The Key Worker links back in with the school and offers practical support such as arranging time off school for counselling sessions or reminding young people and parents when the next session will take place.*

## MAIN OUTCOMES

- Creates a more positive outlook in the young person.
- Reduces the young person's feeling of isolation and 'ill-fitting' in the school system.
- Aids the classroom teacher and resource teachers in reducing disruptive behaviour in their class.
- Reduces absenteeism and suspension.
- Increases self-esteem.
- Enables young people to modify and take responsibility for their behaviour.
- Reduces pupil-teacher confrontation.
- Improves behaviour in the playground.
- Improves relationships with peers.
- Creates greater awareness of consequences.
- Provides parents with support.

## SECTION 3:

# EXAMPLES OF INTERNATIONAL INTERVENTIONS

As this resource has highlighted, many different programmes, supports and interventions are implemented under the umbrella of the School Completion Programme. This section highlights initiatives that are being implemented internationally to support young people at risk. The examples in this section parallel the ten themes explored in Section One:

1. Attendance Tracking and Monitoring.
2. Breakfast Clubs/After-School Supports/Homework Clubs.
3. Transfer Programmes.
4. Out-of-School Programmes.
5. Holiday Programmes.
6. Mentoring Programmes.
7. Learning Support Programmes.
8. Social and Personal Development Programmes.
9. Parental Programmes and Family Support.
10. Therapeutic Support.

## 1 ATTENDANCE TRACKING AND MONITORING

Over the next three years, the *New Zealand Ministry of Education* will spend \$8.6 million on existing and new programmes aimed at helping students stay engaged in learning, and to reduce the level of truancy. They will be carried out at local levels, to best meet the needs of schools and their students.

The new work will also build on the *Suspensions Reduction Initiative* by setting targets for reducing truancy and early school leaving exemptions, and for getting alienated students back into school sooner. Over the last two years, suspensions have dropped in schools by 30% because of this initiative.

They also sit alongside programmes designed to keep students engaged in and enthused about learning. These include the Maori youth mentoring programme He Ara Tika, funding from the Innovations Pool for special programmes for at-risk students, alternative education programmes for students who are alienated from school, social workers in schools, and the activity centres that are attached to schools that cater for at-risk students.



### ***The new programmes include:***

- Putting more resources into selected areas to support truancy interventions.
- Reviewing truancy responses in areas where there are high rates of truancy and concerns that some existing responses are not as effective as elsewhere.
- Supporting a pilot project to develop a streamlined and cost-effective truancy prosecution process.
- Speeding up processes for getting non-enrolled students back into school through a review of the current contracting and funding arrangements with the Non-Enrolment Truancy Service.
- Developing a new data system to track students via the electronic exchange of information about students between schools and the Ministry of Education.
- A project to enhance schools' software packages so they can notify parents automatically via email or text messages when their child is absent.

*For more information: [www.moe.govt.nz](http://www.moe.govt.nz)*

As part of the *Excellence in Cities initiative in England*, the Local Education Authority in *Bristol* aims to ensure that every Bristol secondary school student who needs it has access to a trained Learning Mentor, who will help young people to identify and overcome barriers to learning.

### ***In particular they will:***

- Target help to those who need it most, especially those suffering multiple disadvantage.
- Raise standards and reduce truancy and exclusion.
- Provide a complementary service to existing school staff and to others providing services outside the school.

### ***The key elements of the Learning Mentor role are:***

- To develop a one-to-one supportive relationship with the pupil.
- To support pupils identified as under-achieving, including the more able, gifted and talented.
- To support those pupils where attendance and truancy are a potential or actual threat to their achievement.
- To support pupils in behaviour management.
- To support those pupils at risk of, or returning from, exclusion.
- To support pupils whose achievement is at risk on transfer from Key Stage 2 or on transfer from another school.
- To support pupils at risk of disaffection at Key Stage 4 or dropping out post-age 16.

*For more information: [www.bristol-lea.org.uk/policies/mentors.html](http://www.bristol-lea.org.uk/policies/mentors.html)*

## 2A BREAKFAST CLUBS

The Good Start Breakfast Club is a community programme run by the *Australian Red Cross* where volunteers serve breakfast every day for students in areas of greatest need around Australia.

This vital service provides nutritional support in a comforting environment and works towards encouraging children to develop social and living skills. Through nutritional and social support, the Good Start Breakfast Club programme can help young school students to achieve their full potential.

The programme targets primary school children. Good Start Breakfast Clubs are open for participation to all children in a school. This not only ensures everyone has the opportunity to receive a nutritious breakfast and to learn vital social and nutritional skills, but that the possible stigmas associated with participation are reduced. Geographic areas considered socially or economically disadvantaged are given particular focus.

Reports on the proportion of Australian children who miss breakfast vary from 5% to 30%. Rates of breakfast omission are believed to be higher in schools in disadvantaged areas. Children from lower socio-economic backgrounds are six times more likely to miss breakfast than students from higher socio-economic backgrounds.

*For more information:*

[www.redcross.org.au/ourservices\\_acrossaustralia\\_goodstartbreakfastclub.htm](http://www.redcross.org.au/ourservices_acrossaustralia_goodstartbreakfastclub.htm)

*Bushfield Community College, Peterborough* has a breakfast club running three days a week. The Bushfield Breakfast Club is co-ordinated by a Learning Support Assistant/Youth Worker and Senior Science Technician/Midday Supervisor. It is targeted at 25 pupils from Year 7 referred by class tutors against a criteria list. Progress is measured through regular feedback, both formal and informal, by tutors. Those attending complete agreed target sheets, which are renewed periodically, reinforced and discussed with students. Breakfast club rules have been established collaboratively by the targeted group who have responded well to the rewards received by 100% attendance. They also responded well to acknowledgement of improved effort, motivation, attitude, achievements, punctuality and attendance both in school and at the breakfast club.

*For more information: [www.breakfast-club.co.uk](http://www.breakfast-club.co.uk)*

## 2B AFTER-SCHOOL SUPPORTS

*Come and Play* is a UK national programme of music-making for children age 4-14 in after-school clubs and holiday play schemes.

The programme is a *Youth Music Initiative* devised and delivered by *4Children* (formerly called Kids' Club Network).

Come and Play works with local authority early years and childcare services, leading community music organisations and local authority music services to develop innovative music-making programmes for children in after-school clubs and holiday play schemes. It offers children access to music-making in a fun and informal environment, and the chance to learn new skills at their own pace.



Come and Play reaches children, including those living in disadvantaged areas, who often have had little access to music-making and involves them physically, emotionally and creatively. Children learn about rhythm, sound, tempo, styles, instruments and music from different cultures through vibrant workshops, led by experienced musicians. They also develop their social and communication skills.

Come and Play develops sustainable networks of music activity on local and national levels, uniting the out-of-school and community music sectors. Come and Play also provides training for play workers and musical leaders to ensure quality music provision in out-of-school clubs in the future. The Come and Play Music Making Resource Pack has been produced to support this work.

During 2005 Come and Play will be extended to a further 18 areas, reaching 11,000 children in all.

*For more information: [www.youthmusic.org.uk/Partnership\\_programmes/Come\\_and\\_Play.jsp](http://www.youthmusic.org.uk/Partnership_programmes/Come_and_Play.jsp)  
[www.4children-comeandplay.org.uk/home.asp](http://www.4children-comeandplay.org.uk/home.asp)*

**Boys & Girls Clubs of America (B&GCA)** is a national network of more than 2,800 neighbourhood-based facilities annually serving some 3.3 million young people, primarily from disadvantaged circumstances. Known as “The Positive Place for Kids”, Clubs provide guidance-oriented programmes on a daily basis for children 6-18 years old, conducted by a full-time professional staff. Key programmes emphasise character and leadership development, educational enhancement, career preparation, health and life skills, the arts, sports, fitness and recreation.

Boys & Girls Clubs nationwide are using fun after-school activities to help school districts ensure that all students meet challenging, new educational standards. To support these efforts, Boys & Girls Clubs of America recently published ***Understanding School Standards: A Project Learn Publication on Linking Club Programs to Academic Standards***. The guide provides background information, practical tips and strategies for Clubs to consider in linking their activities to higher school standards.

This Project Learn guide explores the ways in which fun, active learning can support and enhance student achievement. It contains a representative sample of core content area standards along with suggested after-school activities that support each standard. The guide also contains a glossary and resources section designed to help youth development professionals develop fluency in the language and context of school reform in their communities.

B&GCA’s Project Learn educational enhancement programme focuses on assisting children to succeed academically outside the classroom. Inspired by the research of Dr. Reginald Clark, Project Learn seeks to engage children in high-yield learning activities (leisure reading and writing, Monopoly, cooking classes), thereby stimulating their imaginations and creating a lifelong love of learning. Dr. Clark’s research found that low-achieving students traditionally spend non-school hours in activities that have little academic benefit. In contrast, high-achieving students participate in activities that reinforce skills and knowledge learned in school.

*For more information: [www.bgca.org](http://www.bgca.org)*

## 2C HOMEWORK CLUBS

The *Toronto Public Library, Canada* provides a free programme for children who are having trouble doing their homework. Children get one-on-one attention and lots of motivation. The club is open to students in Grades 2-6 who can communicate in English. Each child is paired up with a volunteer and pairs meet at the library once a week. They join other pairs and together, the group plays learning games to build confidence and make homework fun. Children go home with the tools to learn, read and do a better job of their homework. Homework Club volunteers are Torontonians from all walks of life who are fluent in English and like children. Often, they are high school or university students with experience helping kids with their homework. Toronto Public Library provides training for volunteers.

Parents of Homework Club members must sign an agreement of enrolment and attendance. Parents are informed that if their child doesn't meet the conditions, the programme staff might have to ask him or her to leave the club. Children may participate for a maximum of three school years, but participation may be shorter at the programme co-ordinator's discretion.

*For more information: [www.tpl.toronto.on.ca/spe\\_ser\\_homework\\_index.jsp](http://www.tpl.toronto.on.ca/spe_ser_homework_index.jsp)*



It is the goal of the *Seattle University Children's Literacy Project* to support the Seattle Public Schools as they strive to make every child a reader. Illiteracy and related achievement among school children are two of the most critical issues the community faces. Simply stated, children who cannot make it in school today become adults who cannot make it in society tomorrow.

Throughout its 14 years of operation, the Children's Literacy Project, a partnership involving higher education, industry, schools, and community organisations has improved the lives of the community's children.

Since 1990, the project has provided caring tutors for over 10,000 students in the Seattle Public Schools. To date, 4,128 Children's Literacy Project volunteers have contributed over 55,000 hours of service to helping the community's children succeed.

The volunteers are a diverse group. Most are university students but others are faculty and staff members, alumni, and community members. Tutoring occurs on-site in the partner elementary and middle schools. Each school has unique opportunities and tutors choose which school is the best fit for them.

Tutoring opportunities occur throughout the school day and at some schools before and after the school day, including homework clubs. A minimum commitment of one hour a week for three months is required.

*For more information: [www.seattleu.edu/coe/clp/about.asp](http://www.seattleu.edu/coe/clp/about.asp)*



### 3 TRANSFER PROGRAMMES

Better reading and writing and improved Maths scores, attendance and behaviour have all flowed from the deployment of Primary-Secondary Co-ordinators in *South Lanarkshire, Scotland*. An independent report for the authority underlines the value of the new posts, which will eventually be extended to all schools in South Lanarkshire as part of the new community schools initiative.

The Co-ordinators have been working in clusters, focusing on basic standards between P6 and S2 and are said to have been almost unanimously successful in helping to tackle key transition difficulties that have dogged pupils and schools. Other initiatives have contributed, but the Co-ordinators have been vital in developing resources and pushing best practice.

Co-ordinators worked with teachers to reduce the stereotypical beliefs about activity in each sector. They improved the curricular links with a reduction of the mismatch or standstill effect regularly reported by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools when pupils enter S1 from primary schools.

The transfer of information from primary to secondary was improved and pupils were impressed because they felt they had "somebody you know" in secondary school. Pupils who took part reported they had fewer fears before, during and after transfer than those who had not been involved with the Co-ordinators.

The review highlights the co-ordinators' role in identifying children that might be at risk when they make the transfer from primary to secondary and demonstrates that action can be taken.

Most of the 270 pupils who join *Barking Abbey in East London* in September 2002 will already know their way around. The sports college invites primary pupils to after-school clubs in football, dance, music and science.

The children will have met some of the Year 13 prefects and Year 7 pupils who visit primary schools to answer questions about 'big school'. The teachers will also be prepared: Year 7 staff have been observing their primary colleagues to ensure more consistent teaching style.

The secondary school pays for teaching assistants to work with under-achieving children in its two main feeder schools: Manor and Northbury Juniors. The assistants report back to teachers at Barking Abbey enabling them to prepare literacy and numeracy lessons for these pupils. A new transition form will provide information on new pupils' interests and behaviour as well as teacher assessments and test scores.

Funding for transition work has come from an education action zone project. Barking Abbey will become a beacon school and will be funded to spread good practice on transition.

*For more information: [www.literacytrust.org.uk](http://www.literacytrust.org.uk)*

## 4 OUT-OF-SCHOOL PROGRAMMES

The *Re-Education Programme, NG7 area of Nottingham* began in 2002 and provides an educational provision for young people between 12 and 16 years of age. This provision is essentially for pupils who have been excluded, at risk of exclusion or frequently truant from school. The provision covers Maths, English, ICT and social-based studies (raising self-esteem and health education), which are taught for a number of hours depending on the needs of the young person. The provision is located in a safe and informal environment where sporting and social activities are available such as the Duke of Edinburgh award schemes. The classes are small with a maximum of ten pupils in each group and their academic ability is assessed through a diagnostic assessment in the initial stage.

The learning undertaken is accredited, to Open College Network level and for those who are able, to undertake GCSEs. Eventually, as the project progresses, they will be including work placements and vocational studies through local colleges.

The provision welcomes working with various social groups and is committed to providing a balanced education. The aim of the provision is to encourage the pupil back into mainstream education and equip them with the necessary skills to cope at the same time. This is achieved through the following:

1. Raising attendance levels.
2. Sustaining the retention of the pupil.
3. Prescribing achievement that reflects progress.
4. Working in partnership with families and external agencies.
5. Action planning to focus the direction of the pupil.

Although open to all clients who are referred to them, the make-up is presently all male, from a mixed ethnic background.

*For more information: [www.theobservatory.org.uk/publications/EngagingYoungMenlitreview.pdf](http://www.theobservatory.org.uk/publications/EngagingYoungMenlitreview.pdf)*



*The Twilight School in Southern Australia* was started in 2001 to re-connect students who have disengaged from schooling. For every 10-20 students there are two teachers from the mainstream school. This unique crossover of teachers provides continuity to students who return to mainstream education. A unique model of youth work is being piloted to support the young people. The model is intensive and engages with all the students in a 'normal' way, so that a firm relationship and trust can be built prior to any formal intervention occurring.



The programme seeks to support students in gaining employment or work experience using needs based teaching in an adult learning culture. The weekly roster includes work education unit and modules, graphic design and art, PE and community studies, and Mathematics and English focus.

The students attending the Twilight School come from a range of backgrounds, including chaotic families, some are homeless, some have been serious drug users, most have been excluded or expelled from other schools and most have specific learning difficulties. Students are responding well to the flexibility, respect, attention and understanding provided at the school. Of the 29 students who started first term, 22 either went onto Technical and Further Education (TAFE) or back to school.

The Youth Worker's role is to work with the young person concerning their issues so that they become more able to continue to attend the programme. This model is an intensive support model that seeks to locate the Youth Worker in the same space as the young people so that the relationship is more 'normal'. The Youth Worker is involved in the classroom and engages with the young people whilst they are also undertaking their schoolwork. By getting to know the Youth Worker as just another person who assists in the classroom, the young people are much more comfortable to talk with her about their issues than if she worked in the more traditional appointment-based model which most schools use.

This method of engagement creates the trust for the young person to then be able to take the risks necessary to tackle whatever issues she or he is concerned about. The Youth Worker then undertakes the usual range of interventions including meeting with parents, mediating where there is conflict, helping the young person seek help for alcohol or drug issues, assisting in finding accommodation, providing assistance with relationship issues and sexual health, and most importantly, advocating for young people so that they can receive the services and/or support they are entitled to from the community or other agencies.

The following is a fairly typical example illustrating the types of outcomes being achieved. A 16-year-old boy's father died four years ago, just as he was about to start high school. The young person had serious adjustment issues and rebelled at school, finally being excluded because of drug use. During the 18 month period when he wasn't at school he was involved in the drug and offending sub-culture and became homeless. He has returned to school through the Twilight School, has reconnected with his mother and has started helping around the house and taking an interest in his family life again. He is good with his hands and would like to be a motor mechanic or do a carpentry apprenticeship. Through the Twilight School he has done a TAFE course that has helped set him on the employment pathway he would like to take.

The programme is still in the developmental stages and extensive research is required to make the model into a workable option in other Department of Education, Training and Employment regions. Anecdotal information is very encouraging - this type of schooling option is appropriate for young people who have experienced significant disengagement from education.

*For more information: [www.mceetya.edu.au/stepping/casestudies/rec21.htm](http://www.mceetya.edu.au/stepping/casestudies/rec21.htm)*

## 5 HOLIDAY PROGRAMMES

*Christchurch City Council, New Zealand*, organises holiday programmes for young people in the area. The programmes are devised for different age groups between the ages of 5 and 14. Activities include outdoor events (e.g. orienteering and games), arts and crafts (e.g. Maori art, clay painting), sports and movies.

Holiday programmes are open to all young people in the age group; subsidies are available to parents or guardians who have a community service card or who are eligible for a school holiday care subsidy.

Holiday programmes are governed by a number of policies and procedures including information on supervision and safety (including the leader: children ratio, first aid training), behaviour management, complaints procedure, disabilities, health and medical conditions, sickness and refund and cancellations.

*For more information: [www.ccc.govt.nz/programmes/holidayprogrammes](http://www.ccc.govt.nz/programmes/holidayprogrammes)*



*Oasis Children's Services* is based in *Brooklyn, New York*. The organisation designs and implements summer and school year programmes for schools, corporations, communities and agencies. Its core values include:

- Building developmental assets that will enable children to succeed in school and in life.
- Creating communities for children that are safe havens emotionally and physically.
- Developing self-confidence by encouraging children to participate in new activities and to overcome challenges.
- Helping children develop new skills so they can experience a feeling of accomplishment.
- Modelling the behaviours and attitudes that the children are expected to learn.

*For more information: [www.oasischildren.com](http://www.oasischildren.com)*



## 6 MENTORING PROGRAMMES

*The University of York in England* has set up a student mentoring programme that has the following aims:

- To help students improve their grades.
- To reduce truancy.
- To help students deal with bullying.
- To build confidence, motivation and aspirations.
- To help students understand the world of work.
- To introduce students to higher education.

Mentor duties include:

- Establishing a mentoring relationship with a school student.
- Helping to guide the student through their work and exams.
- Providing opportunities for the student to discuss school-related issues such as subjects studied, revision needs, homework patterns and subject choices.
- Providing an appropriately challenging role model.

There are four strands to the mentoring programme:

- **Year 10/11 Mentoring:**  
support for school students, mostly to those undertaking their GCSEs, encouraging and motivating activities both inside and outside the classroom.
- **Transition Mentoring:**  
Year 6 pupils are mentored during their last term in their primary school and accompanied to the new secondary school for the initial visit. They then meet their mentor again in Year 7 at their new school.
- **E-mentoring:**  
Mentoring via email 'conversations' instead of regular face-to-face meetings.
- **STEM Primary Mentoring:**  
Mentoring for primary school students between the ages of 7 and 11 in the subject areas of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths.

*For more information: [www.york.ac.uk/student/ysis/programmes/mentoring](http://www.york.ac.uk/student/ysis/programmes/mentoring)*

**Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS)** is the oldest and largest youth mentoring organisation in the United States. In 2002, the organisation served more than 200,000 young people aged five through 18, in 5,000 communities across the country, through a network of 470 agencies. Research and anecdotal evidence specifically show that BBBS one-to-one mentoring helps at-risk youth overcome the many challenges they face. Little Brothers and Sisters are less likely to begin using illegal drugs, consume alcohol, skip school and classes, or engage in acts of violence. They have greater self-esteem, confidence in their schoolwork performance, and are able to get along better with their friends and families.

There are two core Big Brothers Big Sisters programmes:

- **Big Brothers Big Sisters - community-based:** Volunteers provide 'Littles' with one-on-one time and attention in their communities, typically two to four times a month. During these unstructured outings they cultivate relationships that provide children with skills to manage every day challenges. Through simple friendship, 'Bigs' experience the joy of helping children discover a world of possibilities and opportunities.
- **Big Brothers Big Sisters - in schools:** Volunteers provide Littles with one-on-one time and attention in their schools, typically once a week during the academic year. Teachers identify children who can benefit most from interaction with a caring adult. As their friendships evolve, volunteers and children discover ways to make school and learning fun.

*For more information: [www.bbbsa.org](http://www.bbbsa.org)*





## 7 LEARNING SUPPORT PROGRAMMES

*United Way of New York City* is a community-based organisation that aims to mobilise communities to create solutions that improve people's lives. Recognising that students in public schools need more assistance to stay on track to graduation, in 1990, the United Way of New York City and the New York City Department of Education created the *Community Achievement Project in the Schools (CAPS)* to provide attendance improvement and drop-out prevention services to at-risk students.

CAPS takes a grassroots approach to serving at-risk students. It engages neighbourhood organisations in working with schools, parents and students to help youth succeed in school. Youth development specialists from neighbourhood agencies - mindful of the diversity and needs of specific communities - are placed in the schools to work with teachers to identify and work one-on-one with students who are skipping school, failing classes or struggling with personal problems. The programme provides:

- Tutoring.
- Homework assistance.
- Counselling.
- Parent and family involvement.
- Conflict resolution.
- Peer-to-peer support.
- Literacy through the arts.
- Youth development and leadership.
- Services to address the cultural and language needs of newly-arrived immigrant students and their families.

*For more information: [www.unitedwaynyc.org](http://www.unitedwaynyc.org)*

*Harrogate Granby High School, England* has implemented a Learning Support Department that follows the guidelines for Special Educational Needs (SEN) as set out in the Code of Practice 2001.

The Learning Support Department has continued to build upon existing good relations with subject departments in school to ensure optimum provision for students with Special Educational Needs. The Code states that all teachers are teachers of students with Special Educational Needs and teaching such students is a whole-school responsibility. Systems are in place for the early identification and assessment of students and monitoring of progress.

Individual Education Plans are devised for students on the School Support Record at School Action, School Action Plus and those with Statements of Educational Need.

The Learning Support Department includes a Behaviour Support Team and Home-school Liaison officer. They work closely together and with Heads of Year and Directors of Key Stages Three and Four to address the behavioural, social and emotional needs of students.

Students with Special Educational Needs are given equal access to participate in the full national curriculum and are encouraged to join in with all extra curricular activities.

The Learning Support Department continues to run a variety of activities before, during and after school. The successful lunchtime Homework Club, where pupils can receive help with work set, has been extended to include a before and after school facility for students.

A newly formed Breakfast Club has provided students with the opportunity to participate in pre-school literacy/numeracy/life skills activities and receive a nutritious start to the day.

In addition, a lunchtime activity club, Gapzone, and 'Drop in' club take place over the lunchtime period each day to allow students who have difficulty in forming and maintaining relationships the opportunity to come together in a supervised social situation.

Students with social/emotional needs may have access to a Learning Mentor, either from within the Learning Support Department or on Out-of-school Mentor recruited by North Yorkshire Business Partnership (NYBEP), and overseen by the Learning Support Department. The Mentors assist with personal organisation, provide strategies for maintaining positive behaviours, act as an advocate for the student with staff, and attempt to remove inhibitors to learning.

The Learning Support Department has also been responsible for the continued implementation of a successful Shared Reading Scheme. Teaching staff and Teaching Assistant staff have worked alongside the SEN Governor and 6th Form volunteers to support younger students who have difficulty in acquiring literacy skills. Approximately 50 students in Years 7, 8 and 9 participate in the Scheme.

Support for student learning is provided both in class and on a withdrawal basis as required. It is a flexible provision that can respond to a student's changing needs.

The provision has been further developed and consolidated to ensure that the Harrogate Granby High School Learning Support Department remains a model of good practice within the North Yorkshire Local Education Authority. The Department was confirmed by OFSTED in January 2004 as *Very Good*, and achieved an *Excellent* rating from the North Yorkshire County Council for its SEN provision in October 2004.

*For more information: [www.granbyhs.com/sen/about.html](http://www.granbyhs.com/sen/about.html)*





## 8 SOCIAL AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

The *UK initiative Positive Activities for Young People* aims to steer the energy and talent of vulnerable 8 to 19 years old into a positive direction in life.

Positive Activities offers a broad range of school holiday time activities, providing structured occupation and personal development opportunities, diverting young people from taking part in criminal activities, and giving those at risk of being socially excluded a chance to fulfil their potential.

The programme also seeks to bring together young people from different neighbourhoods and communities across England, breaking down prejudices and improving community cohesion. Volunteering opportunities are offered to help engage young people in activities that will benefit the local community.

There is a focus on supporting pupils who are most at risk of losing contact with education and training opportunities especially during the long summer break. Summer activities can also help to ease the transition between secondary school and adult life and there will be opportunities for gaining accreditation for attendance and achievements.

Young people can choose from quality arts, sports and cultural activities during their school holidays and those who show a particular interest or talent will be encouraged to pursue the activities both on return to school and in subsequent holiday periods.

Positive Activities has been designed to meet local needs, often in close consultation with young people themselves. The schemes offer a wide range of creative and development opportunities on which young people can build. Key workers help to support young people with the greatest needs, both in identifying and gaining access to suitable programmes and in subsequent transition back into education or training.

Young people who particularly benefit from Positive Activities include those who have a poor school attendance record or have been excluded, and those with a low level of academic achievement. Referral agencies include the Youth Offending Teams, the Connexions Service and Behaviour Improvement Programme schools.

The funding has been awarded to government offices based on a formula that takes into account the needs of young people living in the area, local crime 'hot spots', truancy rates and community cohesion issues.

*For more information: [www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk/YouthJusticeBoard/Prevention/PAYP](http://www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk/YouthJusticeBoard/Prevention/PAYP)*

*The Teen Outreach Program (TOP)* in the US is a programme for young people ages 12 to 17 based on the principles of youth development, an approach that seeks to prevent problem behaviours by providing the supports adolescents need to develop into healthy adults. TOP has been successfully used around the nation for more than 20 years. Currently, more than 13,000 young people in more than 176 sites participate in the programme. TOP has proven effective in increasing academic success and preventing teen pregnancy and other negative behaviours among programme participants.

Teen Outreach combines three interrelated elements. TOP involves young people in structured, supervised volunteer service designed to improve their communities. TOP closely links volunteer work to curriculum-guided group discussions of topics directly related to students' service work. TOP also involves participants in curriculum-guided group discussions and activities related to a wide variety of topics, ranging from managing conflict to human development - issues related to adolescent development. The Teen Outreach curriculum, *Changing Scenes*, is the centrepiece of group discussions and experiential exercises facilitated by trained adults.

In a non-threatening environment under the guidance of a caring adult, TOP helps young people develop positive self-image, learn valuable life skills, and establish future goals. The TOP strategy is flexible and can be implemented in a variety of settings where teens routinely meet.

### *TOP Goals and Objectives*

The Teen Outreach Programme is designed to:

- Promote young people's healthy behaviour, increasing successful achievement in school and decreasing negative outcomes, such as early pregnancy.
- Help young people acquire life skills and develop the competencies and capacities necessary to grow into healthy, self-sustaining adults.
- Give young people a sense of purpose through authentic opportunities to contribute in meaningful ways to their communities.

### *TOP Principles/Elements*

In order to achieve TOP's goals, local sponsors must create programmes that:

- Take a youth development approach - valuing young people as assets and resources.
- Forge strong community-wide partnerships to design, implement and monitor programme success.
- Promote learner-centred education and respond to the different needs, development stages and learning styles of young people.
- Connect learning gained through service experience to classroom academics and vice versa.

TOP has been evaluated nationally since 1984. Early, non-experimental studies over a ten-year period showed that the programme produced positive impacts. When TOP participants were compared with demographically similar students who had not been part of the programme, they had:

- 11% lower rate of course failure.
- 14% lower rate of suspension.
- 33% lower rate of pregnancy.
- Lower school drop-out rate.

*For more information: [www.cornerstone.to/top/top.html](http://www.cornerstone.to/top/top.html)*



## 9 PARENTAL PROGRAMMES AND FAMILY SUPPORT

*The US Families and Schools Together (FAST)* programme is a collaborative, community-based programme aimed at preventing school failure, juvenile delinquency and future substance abuse of at-risk elementary school children. The collaboration involves the schools, non-profit mental health services, education and assessment agencies for substance abuse, and the families of the children. FAST targets elementary school children whose teachers have identified as at-risk for later problems and offers the families of these children a two-year family-strengthening programme. An initial eight-week programme of multiple family group meetings (FAST) is followed by two years of monthly parent meetings (FASTWORKS).

FAST is an 8-week programme for families with at-risk children. This interactive programme involves the entire family and aims to:

1. Strengthen the parent-child relationship, to empower parents to become primary prevention agents for their own children.
2. Prevent youths from experiencing school failure by improving their behaviour and performance while increasing the family's affiliation with schools.
3. Reduce stress by developing parent support groups.
4. Prevent alcohol and other drug abuse by the child and family.

For eight consecutive weeks, families attend weekly multi-family group meetings at the school (or other community centre). Each eight-week session serves eight to twelve families. Each meeting occurs in the evening from 5:30-8:30 p.m. All members of the family attend the weekly meetings. The meetings follow a simple routine that is the same each week. The routine is based on published research and theory from the fields of child psychiatry, family therapy, group work, community organisation, substance abuse prevention, delinquency prevention, and abuse/neglect prevention. The core is the structuring of an uninterrupted 15 minutes of parent-child quality time, in which the parent plays with the child. This 'Special Play' is preceded by a shared meal in which each family has its own table, family sing-alongs, structured family communication activities at the table, separate child play and parent discussion. Each meeting closes with a lottery, which every family wins once and is then asked to bring the main dish for the next week's meal.

Families are recruited into the programme in a two-stage process. The first phase involves the identification of children who are at-risk. The targeted child for FAST is a 5 - 9 year old in elementary school who is identified by the teacher as being at-risk for school failure. A team of public-service professionals in the school screens the child. The family is then alerted to the teacher's concerns about the child's at-risk behaviour, and the teacher informs the parents of FAST and suggests a meeting in the parents' own home to explain FAST in more detail. If the parent agrees to be contacted, the second phase of recruitment begins, which is the responsibility of the FAST staff. A FAST staff member and a parent who has graduated from the project visit the family in their home to discuss the project.

FAST is administered collaboratively. Typically, the collaboration involves a school, a mental health agency, and an alcohol and substance abuse programme. The staff of FAST includes administrative and direct service professionals from each of these service systems. Direct service delivery is conducted by school-site teams that are trained together and have a minimum of four professionals in each team, including a mental health professional from FAST of Family Service, an AOD professional, a school professional from the host school, and a parent-liaison (a parent who has graduated from FAST).

After a family graduates from the initial eight-week programme, family members are encouraged to continue to participate for an additional two years in monthly activities planned throughout the calendar year. This phase of the programme is called FASTWORKS — Families and Schools Together, Working, Organising, Relaxing, Knowing and Sharing. FASTWORKS is a series of parent-organised family support meetings that are intended to continue and extend the social network established during FAST. Families who have graduated from a school's FAST programme become members of the same local FASTWORKS network. FASTWORKS relies on a Parent Advisory Council (PAC) to plan and organise monthly programme meetings and activities. The PAC is made up of elected FAST graduates, who are given a budget, develop policy and have responsibility for their school's FASTWORKS.

*For more information: [www.wcer.wisc.edu/fast/index.htm](http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/fast/index.htm)*

*The Southwark Children's Fund* is an English Government-funded partnership programme to help tackle disadvantage and inequalities. The fund aims to provide flexible and responsive services to meet the needs of vulnerable children and young people aged 5 -13 years, their families and carers, supporting them and their families in breaking the cycle of poverty and disadvantage.

Funding was provided by the fund to *Ontrack* - a schools-based multi-agency family support programme. Ontrack services include speech and language therapy, parenting programmes, family therapy and activities for children and their families to help them with the transition to primary school and the transfer from primary to secondary school.

From April 2004 Ontrack will deliver the five core and two specialist interventions in ten Southwark schools. Additional funding will enable Ontrack to expand into two additional Primary Schools close to the current location of East Peckham, and develop a new programme in four Primary Schools in the north-east of Southwark.

### *Pre-school Education*

This is based on Mediated Learning and a worker modelling child-centred interaction within the nursery setting, followed by workshops for parents. The model also relates to the Early Learning Goals and makes links locally with Sure Start programmes.

### *Home Visiting*

Targeted service providing support to families where a child has been identified as having a developmental delay, which would impact on them starting and settling into school. Referral processes clarified with schools and local health visitors to ensure children are identified before they start school. Given the role of engaging vulnerable children and parents with school at an early stage, the aim is to introduce the new social work staff to this model.



### ***Home School Partnership***

The original Cognitive Education Advantage (CEA) programme has been differentiated within the schools as a result of implementation issues. One school is promoting CEA through a teacher led internal programme and supervision from the head. Other schools have been more willing to accept the Mediated Learning approach with parent workshops and training for Learning Support Assistants. A Transition Programme has been successfully piloted and engages new parents (in the term before their children start Reception).

Social work staff, allocated to schools from April 2004, provide home visiting and casework with families referred by the school. Having a base with the Family Support Team provides a strong link for the school with Social Services and access to additional resources.

### ***Parenting Education and Support***

The SPOKES (Supporting Parents On Kids Education) parenting programme will be mainstreamed through training staff from other sectors (Social Services, Education and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)) and by developing stronger link with other CAMHS locality interventions. It is also hoped that parents will become involved as group workers.

### ***Family Therapy***

The Parent-Teacher Drop-in model continues to be effective and expansion will include additional CAMHS input and a link to current community resources as well as clinical supervision of social work staff.

## ***SPECIALIST INTERVENTIONS***

### ***Secondary Transfer***

This model supports transfer to Secondary School and has developed a holistic response covering the application process and support for parents as well as targeted input for 'at risk' pupils through the first term of Secondary School. It also provides after-school and Summer holiday programmes to develop cross-school friendships and increase self-esteem through performance-based workshops. A buddying system has also been developed so that children are involved in the delivery of the Summer Programme and in the future they will link into the school -based groups.

### ***Speech and Language Therapy***

This intervention continues to receive high numbers of referrals. Strategies are being developed to manage the caseload and develop a whole-school approach to children's communication difficulties. Staff also co-work with staff delivering the Secondary Transfer support, Transition Programme and Mediated Learning workshops for parents to promote the link with communication issues.

***For more information:***

***[www.southwark.gov.uk/YourServices/SocialServicesSection/ChildrensServices/ChildFund.html](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/YourServices/SocialServicesSection/ChildrensServices/ChildFund.html)***

## 10 THERAPEUTIC SUPPORT

*Wiltshire Local Education Authority in England* has put together a Behaviour Support Plan for 2004-2007. The production of a Behaviour Support Plan is a statutory requirement by the Department for Education and Skills for every local authority.

Part of the plan includes 'Bridge the Gap' a programme that has been produced as a result of increasing recognition that the emotional well-being of children is essential to engaged learning and has an impact on both behaviour and attitude to learning in the classroom.

Bridge the Gap provides three strands to promoting emotional well-being:

1. It provides schools with a programme of nine sessions to use with children to encourage the skills associated with emotional well-being.
2. It provides school staff with two days training in the theoretical basis and practical aspects of the programme, and an opportunity to reflect on classroom practice.
3. It provides a six-week parent group that aims to work alongside parents to encourage a shared approach to nurturing children between home and school.

The Training Team and facilitators include Behaviour Support and Learning Support Teachers, Educational Psychologists, Education Welfare Officers, Family Support and Behaviour Assistants. The team is made up of 20 people from the above services.

*For more information: [www.wiltshire.gov.uk/macnn/spvulnerablechildren2004.pdf](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/macnn/spvulnerablechildren2004.pdf)*

As part of the *Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) 1990*, legislators in Kentucky laid the groundwork for comprehensive, statewide, integrated service delivery system called Family Resource and Youth Services Centres. Currently, there are 560 centres serving 911 schools across the state of Kentucky. Most centres are located at or near school sites and provide various services according to the needs of the local community.

There are two types of centres. Family Resource Centres serve elementary schools and provide access to child care, parenting training, child development training, parent and child education services, and health screening services and referrals. Youth Services Centres serve secondary schools and provide employment counselling, training and placement, summer and part-time job development, drug and alcohol abuse counselling, and family crisis and mental health counselling.

To become a Family Resource Centre or Youth Services Centre, the proposed school site must have a student population in which at least 20% of the students are eligible for free school lunch. After a centre is established, it is open to the whole community.

Various human services at a school are offered by an interagency task force, which is guided by a local advisory council. The council has school and parent representatives and is responsible for conducting a needs assessment, setting policy, reviewing budgets, and planning for the future. The school Principal actively collaborates with parents and service agencies.

*For more information: [www.cfc.state.ky.us/frysc](http://www.cfc.state.ky.us/frysc)*



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*Note:* All websites were live at time of going to print, if you are unable to access any of the sites, please contact the relevant organisation directly.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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**CSPE** Civic, Social and Political Education

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**EWO** Education Welfare Officer

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**FETAC** Further Education and Training Awards Council

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**HSCL** Home School Community Liaison Scheme

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**JCSP** Junior Certificate School Programme

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**JLO** Juvenile Liaison Officer

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**NEPS** National Educational Psychological Service

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**SCP** School Completion Programme

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**SPHE** Social, Personal and Health Education

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**VTT** Visiting Teacher for Travellers

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**LCA** Leaving Certificate Applied

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# APPENDIX 1

## Questionnaire on Best Practice in the School Completion Programme

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### QUESTION ONE

Which of the following supports are in operation in your SCP project? (Please tick all that apply)

1.  Attendance tracking programme
  2.  Breakfast/After-school club
  3.  Holiday programme
  4.  Learning Support Programme
  5.  Mentoring programme
  6.  Out-of-school programme
  7.  Transfer Programme
  8.  Others (please specify)
- 

### QUESTION TWO

Of the supports noted in Question One and any other supports that you consider to be best practice, which *two* supports can be considered best practice<sup>1</sup> in your SCP project?

1.  Attendance tracking programme
  2.  Breakfast/After-school club
  3.  Holiday programme
  4.  Learning Support Programme
  5.  Mentoring programme
  6.  Out-of-school programme
  7.  Transfer Programme
  8.  Others (for example, Staff Development/involvement, personal/social development programmes, sport/leisure activities):
- 

<sup>1</sup> Indicators of best practice include: level of consultation with stakeholders, level of participation of young people, inter-agency work in running the support, level of attendance, on-going review of the support, level and effectiveness of targeting, expertise of personnel running the support and quality of outcomes.



### QUESTION THREE

*Please answer the following questions on the **two supports** that you have prioritised. Please answer on a separate page.*

**3.1** Please describe in as much detail as possible how these supports operate.

**3.2** When were the supports put in place?

**3.3** Please detail the decision-making processes for putting these particular supports in place.

**3.4** Over what length of time are the supports offered?

**3.5** How many young people do the supports/programmes target?

Please state whether the supports are offered to the target group only or to the whole class/school.

**3.6** Of those young people targeted, how many participate in the supports/programmes?

In your estimation, how has the delivery of these supports improved the level of participation of young people targeted?

**3.7** Have the supports been evaluated/reviewed by all the relevant stakeholders?

If so, please attach a copy of the reviews and any other supporting documents (for example, review template).

**3.8** What personnel are involved in operating the supports?

What sort of expertise do they bring with them?

**3.9** Are there any other agencies involved in the running of these supports/programmes?

If so, please describe the nature of their involvement.

**3.10** What do you consider to be the main outcomes for the young people participating in these supports?

**3.11** In your opinion, have these supports helped to retain targeted young people in school?

# LIST OF SCP PROJECTS

Ardee SCP	Holy Family Parish SCP (Drogheda)
Balally-Dundrum SCP	Jobstown SCP
Ballinteer Community School / Scoil Mhuire (Ballyboden) SCP	Kilbarrack SCP
Ballyfermot "A" SCP	Kilkenny City SCP
Ballymun (BEST) SCP	Killinarden (KEEP) SCP
Ballyvolane / Dublin Hill SCP	Le Chéile SCP (Knocknaheeny)
Ballywaltrim SCP	Lower Crumlin SCP
Bantry/Dunmanway SCP	Mahon/Blackrock SCP
Bawnogue / Deansrath SCP	Mallow SCP
Blakestown / Mountview Educational Opportunities Programme	Mayfield / The Glen SCP
Bray North SCP	Mounttown / Sallynoggin SCP
Bridgetown SCP	Navan SCP
Brookfield / Fettercairn SCP	Newbridge SCP
Cabinteely Area SCP	North East Inner City SCP
Caritas College / St Louise Jnr & Snr Schools SCP	North Inishowen SCP
Carlow SCP	North Kerry (LINK) SCP
Cavan SCP	North Monaghan SCP
CBS Synge Street SCP	North West City SCP
Clár Críochnú Scoile (Connemara)	Palmerstown SCP
Collinstown Park SCP	Quarryvale / Balgaddy SCP
Corduff / Mulhuddart - Together Opportunities for Education	Raphoe SCP
Crumlin Cluster Completion Programme	Rosbrien SCP
De La Salle Schools SCP	SCP Clonshaugh Consortium
Dominican Campus SCP	SCP Dún Dealgan
Donaghmede, Ayrfield, Edenmore SCP	Sligo City SCP
Drimnagh / Inchicore / Bluebell SCP	SMILE (St Munchin's Initiative for Learning and Education)
Dublin 17 SCP	South Clondalkin SCP
Dublin 5 SCP	South Inishowen SCP
Dublin 7 SCP	Southill SCP
Dublin 8 / Liberties SCP	SSTAY SCP (Sexton Street, Limerick)
East Tallaght SCP	St Dominic's / Old Bawn SCP
Edenderry SCP	St Finian's School Completion Plan Swords
Edenmore / Kilbarrack / Raheny SCP	St Mark's / St Maelruain's SCP
Ennis West SCP	St Oliver's Clonmel SCP
Farney SCP	Stranorlar SCP
Fingal SCP	Tipperary Town SCP
Finglas West / South SCP	Tullamore Town SCP
Móinín na gCiseach SCP (Galway)	Tullow Area SCP
Gorey Community SCP	Waterford SCP
Greenhills SCP	Westmeath SCP - Mullingar
	Wexford SCP
	Wicklow / Rathnew / Ashford SCP



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