



Parents – Get Ready for Post-Primary School!

Dublin City North
Children and Young People's Services Committee
www.cypsc.ie @CypscDcn
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TESS Service Strands: Educational Welfare Service, Home School Community Liaison Scheme and School Completion Programme

Tusla Education Support Service

TESS operates under the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, a piece of legislation that emphasises the promotion of school attendance, participation and retention. TESS has three strands namely the **Statutory Educational Welfare Service (EWS)** and the two school support services the **Home School Community Liaison Scheme (HSCL)** and the **School Completion Programme (SCP)**. The three TESS strands work together collaboratively with schools, families and other relevant services to achieve the best educational outcomes for children and young people.

Educational Welfare Officers

Aims and objectives of the Educational Welfare Service

The aims and objectives of this statutory service are to ensure that every child either attends school regularly or otherwise receives a minimum education; to ensure and secure every child's entitlement to education. **Educational Welfare Officers** work with families and children in a child-centred way to overcome barriers to their school attendance, participation and retention; and work closely with schools, educational support services and other agencies to support school attendance and resolve attendance problems for the benefit of children and families.



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School Attendance

- EWOs work through powers designated under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000
- Regular attendance at school is the biggest indicator of academic success
- Chronic poor attendance is defined as missing 10% or more of school days, this is 16.5 days of secondary school, less than 2 days a month.
- Regular attendance promotes a sense of belonging, routine and connection and promotes young people's well being.
- Talk to your child and seek support where necessary as early possible
- Schedule appointments outside school hours where possible
- Check work given on off days/closure days is being done
- Have a contact for school and stay in touch

Preparing for Secondary School

- Practical – Having the correct school uniform, books and equipment etc
- Journey to and from school; talking about what the school day will be like and how lunchtimes will be spent; asking your child about which friends from primary, or outside school, will be at the new school.
- Make sure you and your child are familiar with the school rules and **School's Code of Behaviour** before they start at the school. The school should provide these policies for you, but if they don't, schools should have them available on their website.

Finding Out About the School

- Get familiar with the school layout and get a list of key contacts in the school
- You should find out the name of the Year Head for 1st year. They are responsible for the overall wellbeing of 1st year students and they look out for any early signs of your child not settling in school, or missing school.
- You need to know the name of the form tutor and HSCL (if your school has one).
- Find out how the school communicates with children and parents. Many schools use text messaging and online apps.
- **Keep in contact with your child's school and spot early signs of your child not settling. Early intervention is key to stopping a small problem becoming a big one.**



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The HSCL Scheme

- Home School Community Liaison Coordinators work directly with parents and guardians in DEIS schools
- Part of a student support team *(may include Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Heads, Special Education Needs Coordinator etc.)*
- A link between you, the school and the school community
- HSCL Coordinators are available to speak and meet with you:
 - At school
 - On the phone
 - In the community
 - At your home

How can a HSCL Coordinator help you?

- HSCL Coordinators support families in many ways, especially incoming 1st Year families
 - Organise/ attend school tours (*virtual and/or in person, dependent on HSE guidelines*)
 - Parent Information talks/ coffee mornings
 - Phone calls/ home visits to introduce themselves & help you to help your child start in a new school
 - Induction Packs for new families
 - Information on what online platforms your school is using
 - Help with completing forms
 - Link to local community agencies
 - Courses for parents

School Completion Programme (SCP)

- The SCP is a targeted multidisciplinary support service located in DEIS schools
- Together with HSCL, part of a student support team (*may include Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Heads, Special Education Needs Coordinator, etc.*)
- We work directly (and mainly) with young people who are referred to us and who require additional support to get the most from their education
- We provide a range of evidence-based in-school, after school and holiday supports, including transfer programmes, to build young people's skills and competencies required to succeed in school (e.g., coping skills, social and communication skills, decision making skills, study skills, etc.)
- We advocate on behalf of young people and together with HSCL Coordinators we link the schools and the community ('social pedagogues')

Concerns of 1st year students: SCP perspective

- Social concerns (making new friends, maintaining and *changing* friendships)
- Academic concerns (managing work & homework)
- Organisational concerns (getting to school on time, daily routine, managing lockers, etc.)
- Check in with your child on a daily basis (do they *want* to go to school, are there any changes in their behaviours) & discuss concerns with your school's student support team
- Encourage your child to get involved in activities & to ask for help in school
- Have confidence in your child!

Contacts and Further Information

- Frequently asked questions re return to school
- <https://www.tusla.ie/tess/faqs/>
- National Parents Council: www.npc.ie
- National Parents Council Post Primary www.npcpp.ie
- National Council for Special Education: www.ncse.ie
- Parentline: www.parentline.ie 1890 927 277
- www.schoolsdays.ie
- TESS North City Office: info@tess.ie tel: (01)7718815

Questions?