Tackling Early School Leaving

Medium Risk

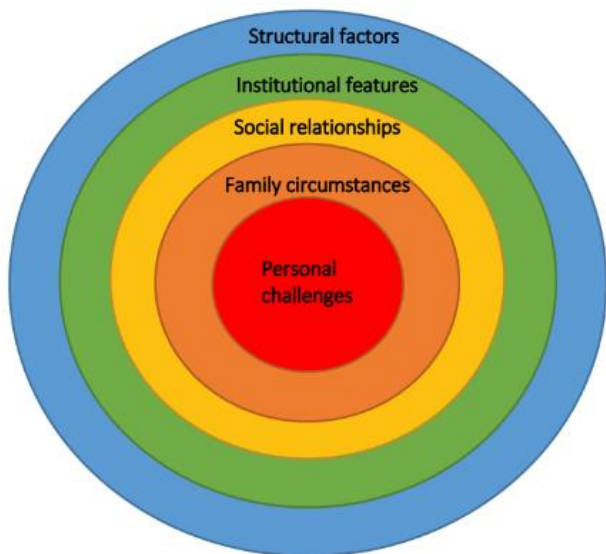# Intervention Strategy Handbook 1: Medium Risk

Introduction

The four intervention strategies featured in this handbook are tried-and-tested approaches for the prevention of early school leaving and re-engagement work in schools. They are suitable for supporting those with medium risk of early school leaving (ESL) as they work well in a small group setting. This allows efficient use of resources to offer tailored support to students who regularly attend school and are able to work comfortably in small groups but face additional barriers and challenges. The Small Group Risk Review, Action Planning Tool and Student Self-Assessment tool support the strategies in this handbook. Examples of how these might be completed is followed by a guide to each of the four strategies.

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How to Use the Small Group Risk Review Tool

A model of the five categories of risk to ESL/ NEET

Category of Risk	Examples
Personal Challenges	SEND, anxiety, low confidence, low motivation, Autism, Transgender/Gender identity
Family Circumstances	Young carer, EAL, CLA, highly mobile or turbulent family life
Social Relationship Challenges	Bullying experiences, limited friendships, isolated, social skills, difficult relationships with school staff
Institutional Features of School	*(School environment, policies, features)* Ongoing low level behavioural issues, lack of access to counselling/additional learning support, school environment or policies
Structural Factors	*(National, political, economic)* Transport difficulties, lack of course availability locally, cuts to local services

N.B. *Early school leavers and students at risk of ESL highlight risks in social relationships and institutional features as the most significant.*

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[1] Brown et al (2021)
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1363908
0.2021.2003007

For further information on students' risks in each domain, you can use:

- ***Transform Family View***, Somerset. For more information please contact Transform@somerset.gov.uk
- Your knowledge of the student
- Conversations with the student about the issues they face
- Annual Reviews/ CIN reviews/MDT meetings/IEP/EHCP
- Information shared during pastoral conferences/progress reviews

Target small group interventions for maximum impact by ensuring that they respond to the risks that small groups of students' share. This can help target support cost-effectively to groups of students who share some similar challenges. The small group risk review tool is based on the most comprehensive model of risks to ESL currently available.[1] A 6-minute video introducing this model is available alongside this handbook. [2]

While some risks are obvious and familiar to schools, other risks impacting ESL behaviours are often not considered. Factoring in these more 'hidden' risks can make a critical difference in the success of interventions.

Many measurable risks (e.g. low attendance, low motivation, not having an academic qualification above level 1) can be responses to risks and difficulties in other domains (e.g. feeling unsupported or not cared about, experiencing discrimination, mental health challenges). This tool encourages educators to think about which categories of risk may be most relevant to a cohort and group together students facing related areas of challenge for targeted small group interventions.

Small group interventions may not be suitable for students with the highest risk of ESL who are likely to require more personalised 1:1 intervention. For students facing less complex barriers, small group support can enable them to feel supported, valued and cared for and offer space to build relationships with staff and peers.

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[2] Conceptual Framework for Understanding the Risks to Early Leaving/ NEEThood on Vimeo

Small Group Risk Review Tool

Use knowledge of individual students' barriers to inform student groupings when considering small group intervention. A carefully constructed group will help target activities and support. Briefly note your assessment of the key risk categories for each student. You could use multiple ticks to reflect the significance of that domain.

Student Name	Personal Challenges	Family Circumstances	Social Relationships	Institutional Features (school)	Structural Factors (national)	Support already in place to address target categories of need for this cohort : Family circumstances/Social Relationships	Identified gaps in provision for cohorts' needs
Jennie Smith		✔	✔✔		✔	N.B wide range of risks but all share need for social relationships input. Selected 11 students	• Opportunities to work on social skills needed to interact with new staff/make new friends/ repair relationships after conflict
John Black	✔		✔				• Relationships education to support healthy relationships
Sherry Finland	✔	✔	✔✔			-bullying experiences (JS, PP, FLJ)	• Limited school contact with parents – unclear around capacity for support at home
Bob Buckland			✔	✔		-limited social opportunities (KG, KL)	• Few opportunities to celebrate their achievements
Alice West	✔✔				✔	-difficult interactions with staff (AS, NP)	
Florence Farrelly		✔	✔✔				
Jed Dunn	✔	✔✔	✔			• PSHE relationships curriculum	
Harry Cooper			✔✔	✔✔		• Tutor Sessions on consent, wellbeing and connecting with others.	
Bev Bland	✔		✔			• Some access SEAL support	
Sharleen West		✔	✔				
Jamie Jones			✔	✔		Family Circumstances relevant for many in group	
Alonso Sanchez	✔		✔✔		✔		
Daniel Smart	✔	✔				• Parents evenings	
David Dredge	✔✔				✔	• Year 10 options drop-ins (but not all parents could attend)	
Ellen Cooper-Brown		✔	✔	✔			
Jack Straw							
Daisy Flint-Hillman	✔	✔✔	✔		✔		
Pete Price	✔						
Stan Wellman	✔	✔					
Buck Brown	✔		✔✔				
Dan French	✔		✔				
Sandeep Khara	✔✔	✔	✔				

Example Small Group Action Planning Tool   Group: 11ESL2   10 x 1 hour contact   Autumn 2   KD

Target **Risk Categories** for group Intervention	Personal Challenges ☐	Family Circumstances ☑	Social Relationships ☑	Institutional Factors (School) ☐	Structural Factors (National) ☐

Pathway To Change Levels To Target	Action 1 Supporting healthy relationships	Action 2 Family Support and Engagement	Action 3 ....
Pathway to Change 1 (1:1) **Supporting wellbeing and general welfare** ☐ *Pathway to Change 2* **Feeling supported and cared for** ☑ *Pathway to Change 3* **Building confidence and self-esteem** ☑ *Pathway to Change 4* **Facilitating autonomy and ownership over learning** ☐ *Pathway to Change 5* **Building valued learner identity** ☐	Social confidence -build skills in - Approaching new people - Dealing with relationship challenges - Setting boundaries and protecting self in relationships - Recognising healthy relationships Small group time to build relationships as a group. Team building activities. Time to feel noticed and appreciated. Build trust with KD and take up to K9 to introduce to LRB as source of support going forwards. Invite to lunchtime support club in K9	Invite parents to support evening/online drop-in – inform about support sessions and seek suggestions / input (parents and students feel supported and cared for) Personal Weekly text updates – positives, info on focus areas that week (boost self-esteem) Build relationships with home and understand capacity/barriers to support school work and revision Family conflict- dealing with arguments, repairing relationships after conflict (feel cared for/ supported – chance to discuss challenges and open up)	

Student Self Assessment: Pathway to Change

Where you feel you sit on the pathway? Think about how you feel about school and your future and use the headings in the pyramid and the example statements on the left to decide what feels like the best fit?

What would help you move on to the next steps on the pathway?

1.

2.

3.

I feel confident and excited about my future plans when I move on from school

I am a confident learner in school and want to build my skills for learning in other places and with other people

I believe a positive future is possible for me

I would like to feel more in control of my learning and future direction

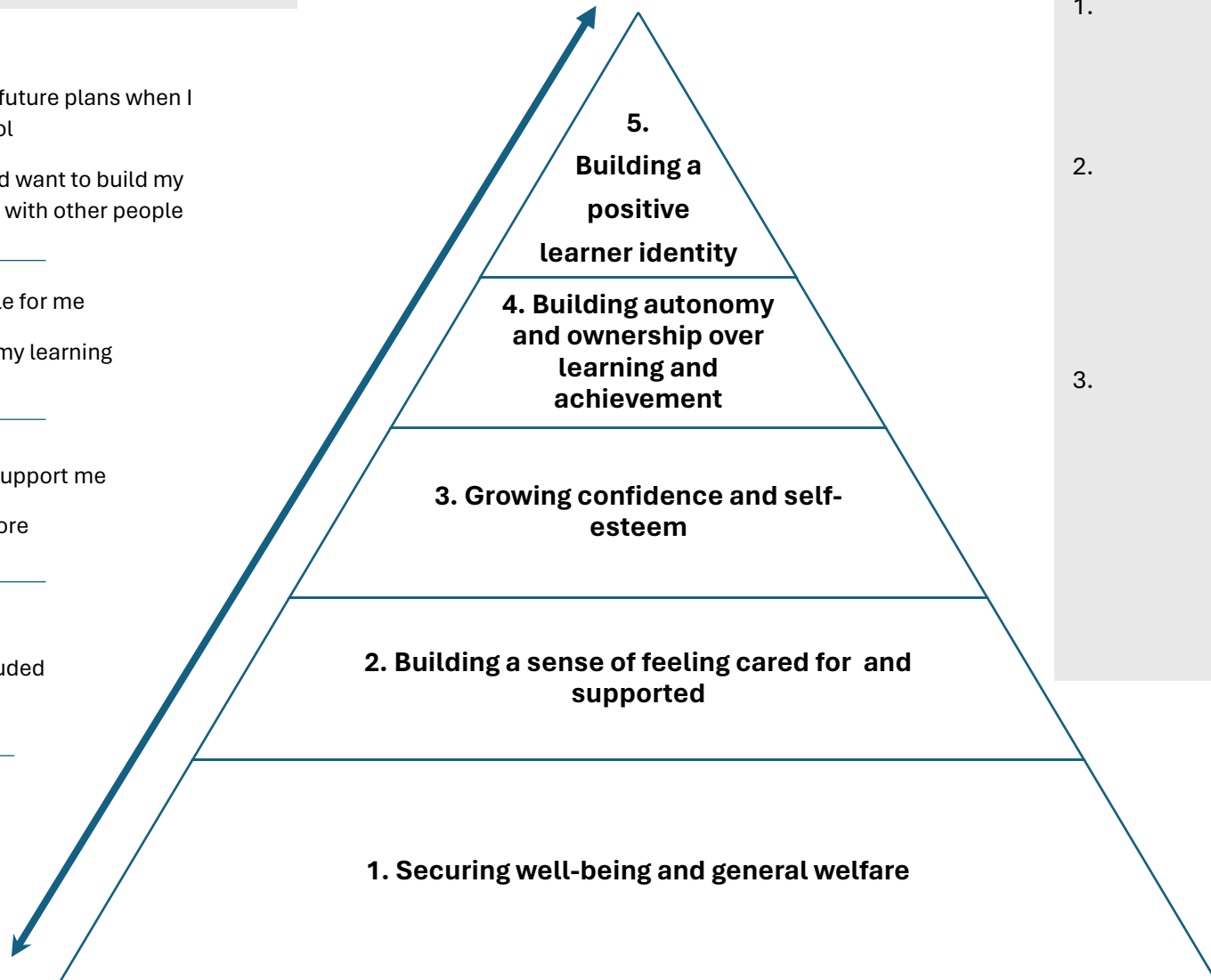People at school care about me and support me

I need to believe in myself more

I regularly attend school

I want to feel more supported and included in school

I struggle with my mental health which makes being in school difficult

There are issues in my life outside school which makes it hard for me to attend and concentrate in school

5. Building a positive learner identity

4. Building autonomy and ownership over learning and achievement

3. Growing confidence and self-esteem

2. Building a sense of feeling cared for and supported

1. Securing well-being and general welfare

Family support and engagement

AIMS:
- To build positive relationships with parents, to increase their understanding of the curriculum and promote their active engagement in their child's education and personal development.
- To better understand the barriers to attendence, engagement and participation of individuals and cohorts through working in partnership with parents.

OVERVIEW: This strategy recognised that families act as a supportive pillar for young people. A low sense of school belonging predicts NEET outcomes. [3] Building a sense of school belonging is especially important for learners from typically underserved and disadvantaged families. Supporting parents to feel a part of the school community is a key step in building the young person's sense of belonging.

Research suggests that the highest value comes from focusing on parental-engagement in young people's learning. Rather than focusing on engaging parents to support the school, the focus should be on supporting the parents to support learning. For instance, it is not about working to increase attendance numbers at parents' evenings and getting parents in to school. Rather, it should be about working to better understand the learning environment at home and supporting parents to support their young people.

Effective communication with parents can support students who are at greater risk of early school leaving in two important ways:

1. Encouraging their academic progress by supporting parents to play an active role in their child's education through building their knowledge of the curriculum, school policies, opportunities, events or support on offer.
2. Enabling a better understanding of the issues underpining disengagement and barriers to feeling a sense of belonging for particular individuals and families through dialogue and collaboration

Interventions to improve family engagement can be targeted at different levels depending on the schools' priorities:

- Whole-school approaches to parental communications across the whole school community
- Strategies for communication and interaction with particular cohorts of parents
- Individual staff tailoring their parental communication approach to their groups/ student
- Developing a family support service focused on offering parents practical and emotional support and the necessary knowledge, tools and guidance to support their child's education
- The platforms and language used
- The events and opportunities offered to families

To be effective, strategies developed within this framework should:

- avoid judging/blaming parents
- demonstrate care and an understanding of the pressures and challenges families face
- prioritise positive communications with parents- sharing young people's successes and achievements
- promote communication over welfare (including home visits)
- aim for boundary-setting to be the same both at school and home

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[3] Parker et al (2022), file:///C:/Users/aliso/Downloads/manuscript%20(2).pdf

Services that demonstrate that the school cares about and understands the pressures on families (as opposed to blaming them) are key to getting families to engage in their child's learning[4].

Where parents themselves have had negative experiences of education and training, or lack trust in education and training, they are likely to communicate this to their children. As a result, young people do not engage positively and are more likely to drop out. It is very important to provide clear guidance on how parents can support young people's learning because most parents want to support learning but do not know how.

RESOURCES:

- Designated Staff e.g family support worker, pastoral lead, attendance officer, achievement lead, individual tutor or mentor.
- Training materials (for staff and/ or parents attending any training focused events)
- Adequate and comfortable space
- Timetabling

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

Actively engaging parents in their child's education and personal development can be a powerful determinant in reducing the risk of early leaving.

Promoting positive communication

Low cost, small adaptations to approaches to communication can have a big impact on young people's school engagement because of the way they build more collaborative relationships with families over time.

- **Sending personal invitations** from the child's teacher or tutor signals care to parents
- **Using positive, personal language rather than authoritative, impersonal language**. For instance '*we really want Jenny in class*' as opposed to '*it is important that your child attends lessons.*'
- **Texts messages** to keep parents informed and up-to-date and opening the door to communication
- **Provide a yearly calendar** of events and opportunities which makes clear the purpose of each event and what parents will gain from coming along

Some young people who have an elevated risk of ESL may be struggling with behaviour or attendance. As a consequence, their parents may receive many negative communications from school. If they are also struggling with their child or other challenges at home, these communications may lead to them feeling embattled rather than supported, prompting a reluctance to engage, defensiveness or feelings of shame or hopelessness. Deliberate efforts to communicate successes, however small, and to keep parents up to date with any school actions to support their child can help reframe the relationship and give a sense of being in it together to support the child.

Other young people with an elevated risk of ESL may feel invisible, or that people like them -of their background, social group, attainment level- are not school's priority. Their families too may feel that school doesn't care about or understand families like them. Pro-active, positive communication can help counter this and help them feel noticed, appreciated and included.

Parent-School Connection Sessions

Parents can be an important resource for each other and also for the school. The focus of these sessions is on providing opportunities for parents to learn new skills, build confidence and develop positive relationships with the school/ other parents. The classes can also help parents learn more about the life

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[4] Goodall (2019) https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00131911.2018.1559801

of the school and the curriculum. They should be sessions where an exchange of experiences are used to collaboratively develop strategies to support young people's development at school and at home.

Building familiarity and positive relationships with staff can nurture parents' confidence in approaching staff with issues, in initiating conversations with their youngsters about their day and learning, and in seeking resources to support their child's learning. Examples of the kind of sessions offered include:
- Workshops, talks, discussions and training events for families based on their interests, concerns, age of children, etc.
- Inviting parents to share their expertise in schools by giving talks about their job, hobby or experiences as part of a curriculum/careers activity
- Holding coffee mornings/afternoons in schools for parents.
- Designating a 'parent's room' with space for them to comfortably meet staff and each other, with useful resources and displays available
- Online or in-person drop-ins for q&a on particular issues

Family support worker/Key worker
Promoting school-family partnerships that are built on trust and mutual respect can help identify families with high levels of need. Specific outreach measures can then be deployed to support them. There may be a need for an outreach strategy to individual families facing complex challenges; or it can be useful to designate a specific key school worker with a concrete role to engage with parents.

The family support worker should be very familiar with the local community and the barriers that young people and families face to learning. They should also have familiarity of the key groups and community affected. For instance, where early school leaving of young people from Roma Traveller families is an issue, the family support worker could be a person from the Roma Traveller community who can work together with school staff.

Key roles for the family support worker include being a point of contact for their designated families/communities and having an understanding of support services and alternative learning provision available locally to identify which providers or types of provision are most appropriate for the young person. A key strategy for this role is to facilitate transitional and alternative learning arrangements through providing 'a warm handover' and 'travel training'

Support for learning outside of the formal curriculum

AIMS:
- To offer informal support for learning outside of lessons or curriculum time that is accessible and respond to students' needs
- To help students to build a broader range of skills and experiences.

OVERVIEW: To support and complement students' engagement with formal education they need opportunities to develop their personalities and broader skills. This strategy focuses on:

- Experiences which allow students to experience less hierarchical relationships with school staff to build a sense of belonging and develop interpersonal skills.
- Building students' confidence and sense of autonomy over their learning by offering informal forms of support that are accessible to them
- Ensuring all students get opportunities to have enriching experiences, broaden their horizons and develop non-academic skills.

The pressures on schools which lead to a heavy focus on academic attainment and constrain their capacity to focus on extra-curricular opportunities can have a disproportionately negative impact on students who have fewer opportunities to access these kinds of experiences outside of school.

Research has highlighted that students 'feeling supported' is critical in tackling ESL/NEET and that this is not the same as support being available. Ensuring the forms of informal academic support on offer outside lessons reflects what these learners need rather than what it is assumed they need will help them feel supported and heard, maximising the impact of these interventions.

RESOURCES:
- Staff to oversee and evaluate student feedback/views
- Staff available for support sessions/ activities
- Adequate and comfortable space
- Staff time to liaise with other organizations and professionals over experiences and activity provision

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:
The following small-scale activities can help develop young learners' soft skills/educational selves and are generally more successful when they are made fun and enjoyable!

Homework support/ Revision club/Saturday school
Spaces for young people to complete homework/ revision in a comfortable environment where they can access support when needed can help them feel supported to succeed. Speaking to students to find out whether a Saturday morning, lunch time or after school slot might work best, and collaboratively agreeing ground rules around refreshments, noise levels etc can help maximise its success. Make sure these are relaxed, friendly spaces which are optional rather than compulsory.

Skills workshops

After discussing with target groups of learners and staff what skills are a priority , specific sessions can be offered during lunch times or at a time that will work well for them. General skills like time management or dealing with conflict in relationships; careers-focussed skills like writing a covering letter or preparing for interview, or wellbeing skills like relaxation or dealing with pre-test anxiety can help students feel supported and plug gaps in skills that they may not have been able build previously.

Enrichment activities

Although these activities traditionally take place outside of school hours with young people choosing what to particate in, this risks ignoring the barriers to participation that many students at greater risk of ESL face. Rather than leaving it to chance as to whether target groups of students access these opportunities, some schools look for ways to make this aspect of school life part of the curriculum, and actively seek to understand what is stopping certain students/ groups from getting involved. When planning enrichment approaches, consider:

- Regular discussion with students about the activities on offer, prioritising/targeting marginalised or underrepresented groups.
- Engaging students to run activities, using the school space to facilitate activities young people are keen to share/try.
- Ensuring staff understand the beneficial impact of opportunities for students to have less formal interactions with staff to build rapport, trust and a sense of belonging.
- What scope there is to build it into the curriculum.
- How trips and journeys can made accessible and inclusive to everyoneso nobody is excluded.

Social support

Young people see social relationship factors as being highly significant in their ESL and NEET outcomes. Over reliance on one particular friend can negatively impact onward transitions when individuals make course or college choices based on what that friend is doing. If issues arise, their lack of a wider social network, friendship skills, low confidence and weak interest in their course can result in them becoming NEET. Anxiety over peer relationships, bullying and struggling with feeling different or singled are key factors in ESL. Initiatives which build connection between peers, build social skills and help young people avoid feelings of lonliness, isolation or overwhelm during unstructured times in the school day are an important part of tackling ESL. Examples could include:

- Lunch time drop-in club for students who prefer a safer, more structured environment.
- Student-led interest groups during break or lunch times in a designated space.
- Social support for distinct groups to connect and find a supportive network e.g. Young Carers, Transgender students, Autistic students.

Using external providers

Connecting with other organisations who can offer motivational, enjoyable activities can help schools offer a broader range of experience. Some issues to consider for young people with elevated risk of ESL:

1. **Warm handovers**. A lack of confidence may make new people /places intimidating to some young people at risk of ESL. Warm handovers, where a staff member who the young person trusts accompanies them to a new activity can help young people access a range of experiences they may otherwise be too anxious to visit by themselves.
2. **Information sharing**. Making sure both the school and provider are clear, not just about any safeguarding risks, but also other things which may help the young person feel at ease or otherwise, can help ensure the experiences are positive. Sharing achievements or passing on concerns will support the students' growing sense of connection.

Learning pathway and careers guidance

AIMS:
- To support young people to make informed choices around their education, training and career trajectories, according to their interests and abilities.
- To provide flexible education and learning so that young people can adapt their learning pathway to suit their needs and interests in preparation for the labour market.

OVERVIEW:

Young people with an elevated risk of ESL require high-quality, 1:1 careers support that focuses on their learning pathway and careers guidance. This enables them to build a trusting relationship with the person providing guidance so that they can support them to identity their interests, passions and the barriers they face.

A key focus is to help the young person think about and communicate their interests and strengths. Time to explore alternatives is particularly key for higher risk students as their aspirations may be shaped by stereotypes, the expectations of others, their self-perception and self-esteem.

Ongoing 'learning pathway' guidance helps young people understand the options open to them, the steps necessary to reach their goals and the different routes they can take to get there. For young people at greater risk of ESL, helping them consider a plan A, plan B and plan C can support them by reducing pressure; by helping them feel in control if they do not attain particular exam grades, and in supporting them to be flexible and adaptable in preparing them to deal with potential setbacks.

Parental involvement at major transition points helps ensure that the school are fully aware of any barriers or challenges, and that parents are empowered to support their child. Other additional steps to maximise the likely success of major transitions for these learners include supported visits to schools or employers, taster days in FE or work settings, warm handovers to ongoing placements, and skill training in areas like communication, completing applications, travel, interviews and starting in new places.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

Careful consideration of local challenges and how they impact students is key. For instance, a key factorl locally in ESL/NEET is the rurality of where many young people live with poor transport links and a lack of access and choice in terms of further education, training and employment opportunities.

Enabling flexible learning pathways. Supporting young people to create a plan A, B and C to equip them with next steps if they hit an obstacle, such as not getting an exam grade, supports autonomy and helps at risk students feel better prepared. It is preferable to an all-or-nothing focus on one option. Rather than motivating some students to work harder, pressure over exam grades causes some students to feel hopeless and as if they are out of options.

Small group or 1:1 support, tutoring, mentoring or counselling. The focus of this support could include travel training, communication skills, planning and decision-making skills, team-work skills, and career-management skills that enable young people to plan and manage their learning and work life paths.

Parental involvement in building knowledge of learning pathways. Parents and/or primary carers are key champions in supporting young peoples' learning pathways. Some families who have worked intergenerationally within key industries in the region (i.e. agriculture) do not see the value of further/higher education and training routes in alternative vocations areas. Sharing knowledge about

regional (and national) industry opportunities is important in broadening parents' aspirations as to the range of (local) opportunities for young people.

Promoting positive teacher-pupil relationships in sharing young peoples' work and education aspirations. The education and labour market aspirations that young people start to develop as a result of employer/education/community engagement activities are fragile and need to be nurtured and encouraged. This points to the importance of sharing young peoples' aspirations with key teachers and senior leaders (with young peoples' consent) in order that they be encouraged and built on in making connections with school/community opportunities that arise and within topics/curricular covered in key subject areas.

Support participation in extracurricular activities during the summer break to increase motivation. This could involve allocating designated spaces (both in schools and online) where families, young people (i.e. current students and alumni), employers and other community members can come together for a range of different after school clubs and activities to support students' learning in a structured but informal way. This helps to increase young peoples' motivation, develop interests, and build important skills that will facilitate their integration into society and the workplace.

Travel Training to help young people (particularly those with SEND) develop the confidence and skills to travel independently on public transport and walking routes in order to get to education or work providers, other key services, or for leisure. This is an important life skill and should focus on developing young peoples' confidence, personal as well as road safety, how to use timetables and buy tickets, and how to deal with things that might go wrong (e.g. if a bus is late). This can be approached in a variety of ways including working one-to-one with young people, developing a training plan that meets the young person's needs, and getting feedback on progress.

Embedding the Eight Gatsby Benchmarks of Best Practice for Careers Development:

The CEC has been actively involved in helping schools to work towards achieving the benchmarks and has introduced a free evaluation tool called 'Compass' for schools and sixth forms in England to see how they are performing. The eight Gatsby Benchmarks are listed and explained below with some ideas on how they can be implemented, according to the GBTS (CEC).

1. **A stable careers programme**. Every school should develop a stable, structured careers education and guidance programme that is explicitly supported by senior management. An appropriately trained person (e.g. a Careers Leader) should be responsible for the delivery of the programme. There should be a clear plan for how the careers programme will be implemented, which should be reviewed annually. Tools such as 'Compass' and 'Tracker' should be used to evaluate careers provision and make future plans for improvement. The programme should be clearly understood by key stakeholders who should have opportunities to discuss expectations, contributions and benefits and regularly provide evaluative feedback which is used to inform future planning of the programme. The programme must be easily accessible.

2. **Learning from career and labour market information**. Accurate and up-to-date information about education and training options and labour market opportunities should be made available to all students and their primary carers. This is important for raising aspirations, promoting social mobility and enabling young people to make effective choices and transitions. Information could be provided on: progression routes into the local labour market and the skills required for them; courses and qualifications; training and apprenticeships; job applications and interviews; working life; salaries and financial planning; alumni's successful transitions etc. An informed adviser should support them to make best use of the information, which may need to be adapted to meet the needs of different learners. It is suggested that young people are taught how to find and process information from year 7 onwards and that by the age of

14, all students should have accessed and used career and labour market information to inform their learning pathway and careers decisions.

3.   **Addressing the needs of each pupil**. Students need to be given opportunities for learning pathway and careers guidance that are tailored to their needs, which may vary at different stages such as at key transition points. The advice and support offered should enable students to challenge any stereotypical thinking and help them create positive but realistic aspirations. It is important that schools gather enough information about each student's knowledge, skills and career needs so that they can support them to overcome any barriers to progression and work towards achieving their learning goals and developing needed skills. Vulnerable students, particularly those at risk of NEET or with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), should be identified and monitored as they may need additional or more tailored support through for example mentoring.Schools should systematically keep records of the individual advice and support provided to each student as well as of ensuing agreed decisions. These records should be accessible by all students to help them advance their study and career plans with support from relevant school staff and primary carers. Schools should also collect accurate and up-to-date data on each student's education, training or employment destinations for at least three years after they leave school. Where possible, and in line with ethical procedures such as the Data Protection Act, this information should be shared with current students to support the development of their plans and enable them to give feedback on the careers programme they are involved in. It might also be possible for students to hear from alumni who have made good progress with their learning pathway and careers plans.

4.   **Linking curriculum learning to careers**. All teachers should link curriculum learning to careers in order to enable students to develop their career learning alongside their subject learning, and enhance their personal and social development. An effective way to do this would be for subject teachers to highlight the relevance of their subjects for a wide range of future career paths. In addition, all subject teachers should emphasise the usefulness of English and maths skills for a range of learning pathways and careers. Key ways of working towards this benchmark includes: providing career learning as a subject in its own right (e.g. through careers education or PSHE); incorporating career learning within other subjects, which should be audited, tracked and supported; organising career learning through extra-curricular activities (i.e. enrichment activities strongly connected to the formal curriculum).

5.   **Encounters with employers and employees**. Schools should form links with employers and build in opportunities for all students to learn from employers about work, employment and skills that are valued in the workplace. This could include involving community Mentors who are in prominent positions within the local regional community; i.e. local employers and town planners. Local business people are ideally positioned to offer insights and advice related to work opportunities in the region as well as the types of skills, aptitudes and experiences that employers require. Initiatives could include mentoring, careers talks, working on CV writing skills and practicing mock interviews, developing 'soft-skills' such as time management and the structuring of routines, and workplace visits. It is suggested that students should participate in at least one 'meaningful encounter' with an employer every year between Years 7-13. A meaningful encounter is defined by the Gatsby Charitable Foundation as 'one in which a student has an opportunity to learn about what work is like or what it takes to be successful in the workplace' (CEC, p.31). Schools could work with the regional Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to make sure careers plans are aligned to the strategic economic plan of the region.

6.   **Experiences of workplaces**. All students should have first-hand experiences of the workplace through work visits, work shadowing and/or work experience. This helps them to explore career opportunities and create networks. The GTS specifies that a workplace visit enables students to experience a work environment first-hand, observe work processes and talk to staff about their roles. The visit could also be useful to inform a topic, issue or problem related to a subject they are studying. Work shadows involve a student following an employer or employee at work for a day or longer to find out what they do. This enables students to learn about aspects of a particular job they would not have access

to through a work experience placement. Work experience involves students doing real work tasks in a workplace. This could be arranged in different ways, for example a student might do one day a week over a few months (e.g. as part of supported internships or technical courses for college students) or a one or two-week block. It is suggested that by the age of 16, every student should have had at least one experience of a workplace, additional to any part-time jobs they may have. By the age of 18, every student should have had one further such experience. Experiences of workplaces should not be an 'add-on' but rather part of a programme of work-related encounters at different stages of a student's learning pathway. Students should be supported by relevant school staff and by their families to choose workplace experiences that fulfil their needs and interests. All students should be prepared well for these experiences and supported during these. Schools need to work closely with employers to ensure that students' experiences are positive – this is important for motivating and inspiring young peoples' work goals. After the work experience, students should have the opportunity to reflect on what they have learned. One strategy to celebrate the achievement of young people in the role could be the co-ordination of an event whereby young people and their work line managers present to a community audience their experiences and gains. This could be held in a community space and serve the dual purpose of building links with the local community and networking.Employers should also let the school know their perspective of how the work experience went and note any particular achievements in order to promote the sharing of good practice.

7.   **Encounters with further and higher education.** Students should know about a wide range of post-compulsory school options, including academic and vocational routes through further and higher education institutions, apprenticeships and other work-based training providers. They should have meaningful encounters with such providers through, for example, off-site visits and direct interactions with people in key roles, such as lecturers and current young people on apprenticeships. It is suggested that by the age of 16, every pupil should have had a meaningful encounter with a provider of the full range of learning opportunities. By the age of 18, all students who are considering applying for university should have had at least two visits to universities to meet staff and students. Such encounters are important for raising aspirations and enabling young people to make the right choices for themselves. It is particularly important that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are supported. Furthermore, schools should start initiatives related to this benchmark early i.e. before students are at a point when decisions need to be made. Research suggests that from Year 7 or earlier, initiatives to raise aspirations and build resilience are effective. Early initiatives could involve providing key information and guidance and developing a planned programme of on-site and off-site encounters. Close cooperation with families and/or others involved in supporting young people to think about their options and make decisions is also key.

8.   **Personal guidance**. Careers guidance activities should be an integrated part of the overall careers programme and should be available whenever significant study or career choices are being made and timed to meet young peoples' individual needs. All students should have opportunities for guidance interviews and career conversations with a Careers Adviser, who could be internal (a member of school staff) or external, provided they are trained to an appropriate level (i.e. they hold a careers guidance qualification at Level six (degree level) or higher). Support and advice should be personalised to each student's needs and abilities. Best practice suggests that every student should have at least one careers interview by the age of 16, and the opportunity for a further interview by the age of 18.

Support in building and navigating healthy peer relationships

AIMS:
- To prepare young people for the future by supporting them to develop healthy peer relationships
- To build skills in developing, sustaining and repairing relationships with other people of their age group.

OVERVIEW:

A key factor that causes young people to drop out of education or training is the social challenges they face in terms of building and navigating healthy relationships with peers. This action therefore focuses on a range of strategies which support young people in navigating healthy relationships. This includes support in:

1. Recognising what are healthy and unhealthy relationships (social, learning, working, romantic).
2. Building healthy new relationship and ending negative 'unhealthy' relationships
3. Navigating relationships in terms of understanding conflict and disagreement as part of relationships, as opposed to seeing it as a signal to end the relationship.
4. Developing key strategies necessary to maintain positive peer relationships, e.g collaboration, communication, compromise, give and take.
5. Recognising healthy romantic relationships.
6. Navigating online interactions and understanding the risks and benefits of social media interactions
7. Recognise dangerous and potentially damaging relationship, such as grooming.

Rather than being a generic programme, this provision should be responsive to young people's circumstances, which may differ according to cultural group, gender, age, material resources, social and emotional and mental health needs, special educational needs and disabilities. This action requires the young people's active involvement and the support of a designated person to co-ordinate internal and external expertise and practice.

This strategy involves working with other stakeholders including teachers, MHST staff, counsellors, health practitioners, educational psychologists and leadership teams to develop a targeted programme of support for identified small cohorts of young people.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

Supporting young people in building and navigating healthy peer relationships involves a range of strategies and resources with small groups as well as engaging support from specialist external services. It may include:

Activities to foster social and emotional development

Focusing on friendship dynamics rather than the facilitation of individual skills and competencies.

Identifying what are 'healthy' and 'unhealthy' relationships: Young people who have experienced childhood abuse or neglect may not have experienced healthy relationships in their childhood.

Guidance in responsible interaction on social media: This includes raising awareness of the threats and risks (e.g. sexting- sending indecent images) and developing a respectful, responsible etiquette in using such platforms.

Strategies for ending and starting relationships: For instance forming a 'healthy relationships' peer-support group, whereby young people opt into a within-setting programme. Participants could form a network to support each other along the journey of ending and building healthy relationships with support from external agencies.

Education programmes that emphasise collective values, respect, empathy and inclusion: For instance the 'Roots of Empathy' programme

Leadership strategies for supporting peer relationships

Timetabled opportunity to address social relationships issues and respond within small group activities that promote the importance for young people in maintaining longer-term healthy relationships that can accommodate positive change.

Signposting pastoral support mechanisms: Ensuring the process for responding to social, behavioural, psychological and emotional issues is transparent, identifies, key persons responsible, is followed consistently and that staff are accessible and approachable.

A clear student-informed bullying policy, e.g. one in which different forms of bullying are made identifiable including; physical, verbal, 'cyber', and relational aggression (exclusion by subtle methods such as ignoring, smirking or dismissing victim's attempts to be included).

Instilling within teachers a recognition for the value of friendship management: Peer relationships operate within the formal as well as the informal parts of school. It is therefore important that teachers also recognize the importance of supporting young peoples' peer relationships in informing the way they may respond to friendship issues within the classroom.

Modelling appropriate relationships: where adults working with young people demonstrate to each other and to learners what are the constituents of positive and respectful reciprocal relationships.

Paired and small group support for navigating relationships

Peer Mentoring: Older young people are well positioned to understand and relate to social relationship issues affecting younger learners. Peer mentoring must be underpinned by a recognised training programme in order that peer mentors are equipped to support young peoples' social and emotional concerns (see Peer Mentoring in Handbook 1of this series).

Communication skills training: particularly in providing a prompt sheet and/or guidance in how the young person can best present themselves to different groups.

Conflict management and resolution sessions: This action recognises that some learners may need help and support in navigating friendship issues. Some staff within educational settings may think that these such issues are trivial or not within their role. However, mediation for friendship issues can play a key factor in recognising conflict, disagreement, and compromise as key aspects in managing relationships. These skills can also have direct application in navigating other types of peer relationship.

Circle-time 'safe space' for addressing social issues: a regular timeslot in the daily/weekly routine in order to raise, discuss and debate relational issues.

Help in identifying the features of 'pro' and 'anti' educational friendship cultures: a focus upon the values, expectations, norms and behaviours of the friendship group and to what extent they align with those of school, education or training. This is useful in order to depersonalise friendship or social group structures within a more general focus upon what makes healthy and unhealthy peer relationships.

Identifying a panel of 'peer buddies'; Peer buddies are young people representatives that offer friendship and support for young people who have experienced challenges in making friends.

Support from external agencies or support organisations

Working with organisations that provide education and support on the topic of healthy and unhealthy relationships. One example is in providing specialist guidance in addressing key issues such as protecting young people from 'grooming'. This refers to exploitative attempts, often masquerading as older boyfriends, which lead young people into the sex industry. It also refers to the support necessary to recognize other types of physically, sexually or emotionally abusive relationships. Splitz is a local charity that includes individual resources but also an educational element on domestic abuse and consent

School nurse and local sexual health services. Local authority webpages provide links to services that are available in their area. For example, see the resources section for links to Wiltshire council guidance and information on sexual health; and BANES council links, in particular; 'clinic in a box' and C-Card.

National sexual health organisations e.g. the youth arm of the Terrence Higgins Trust, the UK's leading HIV and sexual health charity, Young and Free provides advice and resources for young people regarding healthy and unhealthy relationships, and strategies for promoting sexual health (see resources).

Resources, References and Further Support

FAMILY SUPPORT AND ENGAGEMENT

Campbell, C. (2011) National College for School Leadership. How to involve hard-to-reach parents: encouraging meaningful parental involvement with schools. How to involve hard to reach parents : encouragin meaningful parental invovlement with schools (publishing.service.gov.uk)

CEDEFOP. Toolkits. VET toolkit for tackling early leaving, Supportive family environment. Supportive family environment | CEDEFOP (europa.eu)

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Mentally Healthy Schools. Parent/carer engagement : Mentally Healthy Schools

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Somsert Children and Young People, The Somerset Wellbeing Framework. Involving Parents and Carers. Somerset children & young people : Health & Wellbeing : Wellbeing Framework Getting Started Involving Parents And Carers (cypsomersethealth.org)

The Sutton Trust. Engaging parents - Sutton Trust

SUPPORT FOR LEARNING OUTSIDE THE FORMAL CURRICULUM

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Drop-in. How can non-formal education prevent Early School Leaving? DROP'IN | Early School Leaving prevention (drop-in.eu)

Kingston Academy. Going Beyond Programme. Going Beyond Programme - The Kingston Academy

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, Glasgow South Sector Youth Health Improvement Team. *Resilience Toolkit*. Available online at: https://ed4health.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Resilience-Toolkit-Teens.pdf [Accessed 01 July 2020]

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Whole Education. A charity which supports a network of education leaders to focuses on holistic improvements in schools. https://wholeeducation.org/

LEARNING PATHWAYS AND CAREERS ADVICE

CareerConnect. The Power of Early Intervention in Careers Support in Sefton. Blog: The power of early intervention in careers support in Sefton - Career Connect

Careers and Enterprise Company.Tracker. Getting started guide | CEC Resource Directory (careersandenterprise.co.uk)

Careers and Enterprise Company. Compass+. Getting started guide | CEC Resource Directory (careersandenterprise.co.uk)

Career Pilot. Careerpilot : Plan your future work & study

Careers and Enterprise Company.Tackling NEET Toolkit. Tackling NEET Toolkit | CEC Resource Directory (careersandenterprise.co.uk)

Careers and Enterprise Company. Resource Directory. Welcome to the CEC Resource Directory | CEC Resource Directory (careersandenterprise.co.uk)

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Education Development Trust. The Future Direction for Careers in England. The future direction for careers in England: maximising opportunities for personalised guidance within school and beyond - Education Development Trust (edt.org)

Somerset County Council. Independent Travel Training. Independent Travel Training (somerset.gov.uk)

Somerset Education Business Partnership. Somerset Education Business Partnership (EBP) (somerset-ebp.co.uk)

SUPPORT IN BUILDING AND NAVIGATING HEALTHY PEER RELATIONSHIPS

Boxall Profile. Assessment tool for social, emotional and behaviour difficulties for children and young people. https://www.nurtureuk.org/introducing-nurture/boxall-profile

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Somerset Children and Young People, The Somerset Wellbeing Framework. Developing Positive Relationships in your School. Somerset children & young people : Health & Wellbeing : Wellbeing Framework The Pillars Relationships (cypsomersethealth.org)

Terrence Higgins Trust (2020) Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships, Available online at: https://youngandfree.org.uk/relationships/healthy-and-unhealthy-relationships/ [Accessed 01 July 2020]

We are Teachers (2019). What Teachers Need to Know About Restorative Justice:What is this alternative to suspension, and does it really work? Available online at: https://www.weareteachers.com/restorative-justice/ [Accessed 01 July 2020]

Worth-It. Why Positive Relationships are Essential for Improving Behaviour and Wellbeing at School. Behaviour and wellbeing can be improved through positive relationships at school (worthit.org.uk)

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