



Seirbhís Tacaíochta  
Oideachais Tusla

Tusla Education Support Service

# Every School Day Counts



[www.tusla.ie/tess](http://www.tusla.ie/tess)

## Our mission

Our mission is grounded in our overall organisational values of trust, respect, empathy, working together and integrity and is shown by the behaviours that anyone who interacts with us can expect to:

Tusla Education Support Service (**tess**) promotes and supports:

- School attendance
- School participation
- School retention

Working together we can provide good quality, supportive services to achieve better educational outcomes for children, young people, families and communities.



## Introducing **tess**

When Tusla, The Child and Family Agency was set up on January 1st 2014, it brought together a number of child and family services under one agency.

One of these services was the **Educational Welfare Service (EWS)** which transferred across from the former National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB). Tusla became responsible for the integration, management, development and direction of the three strands of this service, the Statutory Educational Welfare Service, and the two school support services: the **Home School Community Liaison Scheme (HSCL)** and the **School Completion Programme (SCP)**. The three strands of tess work together to promote, support and safeguard every child's right to an education. The core focus of the service is school attendance, school participation and retention of students to complete their education.

As a consequence of the transfer from the NEWB, one of the three strands, the statutory Educational Welfare Service, shared the same name as the title of the parent service and this ambiguity caused confusion which needed to be addressed.

To create a greater level of awareness of the whole Educational Welfare Service, it was decided a new overarching service title was needed, which better reflected the joined up and collaborative nature of the three strands. To achieve this, a persona for EWS was created within the parent Tusla brand. We are now introducing our new brand which is **tess - Tusla Education Support Service**. **tess** is clearly aligned with the vision, mission, values and tone of voice of the parent brand.

**tess** knows that parents want the best for their children. **tess** believes this is best achieved by children going to school.

**tess** embraces the power within families to support their children's education.

**tess** envisages an Ireland where every child reaches their full potential.

## **tess** manifesto

**tess** knows that parents want the best for their children  
**tess** believes that this is best achieved by going to school  
**tess** envisages a world where every child reaches their full potential  
**tess** embraces the power within families to support their children's education  
**tess** wants to make children feel supported and confident  
**tess** cares deeply about every child taking part in school  
**tess** wants to be seen as the best source of advice and guidance  
**tess** is inspired by what children and families have to say  
**tess** is responsible for doing the best for the children and families we work with  
**tess** will show a reliable, respected and responsive service to encourage children to go, take part in and stay in school  
**tess** believes 'every school day counts'

**tess** is inspired by what children and families have to say.



# Every School Day Counts

## Home School Community Liaison Scheme

Under **DEIS** (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) the **Home School Community Liaison Scheme (HSCL)** seeks to promote partnership between parents, teachers and community family support services. A HSCL Coordinator is a teacher from a participating school/s who is released from teaching duties, for a maximum of five years, in order to work intensively with and support parents/guardians. The overarching goal of the HSCL coordinator is to improve educational outcomes for children through their work with the key adults in the child's life. The HSCL Coordinator also works in an integrated way with the other two strands of **tess**, **School Completion Programme (SCP)** and **Educational Welfare Service Statutory (EWS)** in order to provide appropriate initiatives and interventions for parents and students.

**Home Visits** are the primary point of contact for HSCL Coordinators, as this is where strong relationships are built with parents.

The scheme supports families as their children transition from early education to primary school, from primary school to post-primary school and from post-primary school to further and higher education, training or employment.

## School Completion Programme

The **School Completion Programme (SCP)** is a targeted programme under **DEIS** which supports children and young people to improve their school attendance, to actively engage with their education while in school, and to enable them to complete their education to Leaving Certificate or equivalent.

The SCP provides supports to children and young people in primary and post primary schools, and to those who are out of school and have not successfully transferred to an alternative learning site or employment. The SCP provides support before school, around the school day, after school and during holidays.

Each SCP project designs and provides a range of small group and one to one supports which best meet the needs of local children and young people. These include evidence based and evidence informed programmes which enable children and young people to achieve their best educational outcomes. SCP projects may also provide a range of universal early intervention/prevention and brief intervention programmes to address any issues with school attendance, participation and retention as early as possible.

The SCP works in partnership with the **Home School Community Liaison Scheme** and the **Educational Welfare Service**.

## Educational Welfare Service (Statutory)

The Educational Welfare Service advises and assists parents and schools, so that concerns and problems around attendance can be addressed as soon as possible. The EWS statutory service encompasses all recognised schools in the State. Educational Welfare Officers (EWOs) work closely with the **HSCL** and **SCP** coordinators to support attendance, participation and retention in **DEIS** schools.

Legislation dictates that children should be in school until the age of 16, unless they are on the Tusla Section 14 register as being in receipt of education other than in a recognised school. Every school is required to have a School Attendance Strategy and a copy of this strategy should be submitted to **tess**. A school principal is obliged to inform an EWO in writing where a student is suspended from a recognised school for a period of not less than 6 days and to report unauthorised non-attendance above the threshold of 20 days. This is currently carried out through the School Returns mechanism.

If a school contacts an EWO with concerns in relation to a student's attendance, the EWO will talk to the school principal or designated staff member to find out what efforts have been made to date to help the student. The school may then decide to submit a referral about this student. Once this referral is screened and assigned to the local EWO, they may contact the family and arrange to meet them. Home visits are an essential part of an EWO's work and the first meeting can very often open a pathway to a solutions for a child and family. If in the opinion of **tess** a parent is failing or neglecting to cause his or her child to attend school then **tess** may prosecute this parent under the Education Welfare Act, 2000.

Parents (and students who have reached 18 years of age) have a right to appeal the following decisions made by a school Board of Management:

- Permanent exclusion from a school.
- Suspension to the cumulative of 20 days in any school
- Refusal to enrol

## Every School Day Counts

Schools work hard on a daily basis to promote attendance as they strive to improve educational outcomes for their students. Attendance is also central to the work of **tess** and in order to support this shared goal, **tess** promotes the annual '**Every School Day Counts**' national attendance campaign every November. We encourage students, parents, schools and their wider communities to join with us in this campaign as '**Every School Day Counts**'.





**tess**

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**tess** includes The Home School Community Liaison Scheme  
The School Completion Programme  
The Educational Welfare Service (Statutory)

