



# Beaufort College

## Home School Community Liaison Policy

### Rationale

The Home School Community Liaison (HSCL)<sup>1</sup> Scheme aims to foster partnerships between parents, teachers, and community support services to enhance students' learning experiences and encourage their continued participation in the education system. By strengthening these collaborations, the HSCL<sup>2</sup> Scheme seeks to maximise attendance, engagement, and retention, ensuring that students fully benefit from their educational opportunities.

### Relationship of this policy to the school ethos

*Beaufort College is committed to quality education. It seeks to enrich students' lives and empower them for life's challenges. This is done in a caring atmosphere of good order and discipline and in partnership with others.*

The HSCL policy directly supports Beaufort College's mission statement by fostering strong partnerships between the school, parents, and the community, enhancing the quality of education provided. It enriches students' lives by addressing barriers to learning and providing additional support, empowering both students and families to overcome challenges. Through a caring and collaborative approach, the HSCL scheme contributes to creating a positive and disciplined school environment, in line with the school's values of care and good order.

LMETB's core values and principles<sup>3</sup> of Excellence and Innovation in Education, Care, Equality, Community and Respect underpin Beaufort College's mission statement and are embedded in all school policies, procedures, plans and practices.

*Building relationships with parents to support attendance, retention and participation of those students experiencing educational disadvantage and marginalisation, by forming links and working in collaboration with the school and wider communities.*

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.tusla.ie/services/educational-welfare-services/hscl/>

<sup>2</sup> Home School Community Liaison

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.lmetb.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/LMETB-Provider-Profile-FINAL.pdf>

## Goals of this policy

The goals of the HSCL (Home School Community Liaison) scheme, are designed to foster stronger partnerships between parents, schools, and communities to improve student outcomes.

These goals include:

- Maximising Student Participation and Retention: Ensuring students remain engaged in education and complete their schooling by addressing factors that may hinder their participation, such as social or economic challenges.
- Promoting Parental Involvement: Actively encouraging and supporting parents to become more involved in their children's education, decision-making, and school activities, which helps create a supportive learning environment.
- Building Positive Home-School Relationships: Strengthening the relationship between schools and families through open communication, trust, and collaborative efforts to support the child's education.
- Addressing Educational Disadvantage: Identifying and overcoming barriers to education for students from disadvantaged backgrounds by providing additional support and resources to families.
- Supporting Students at Risk: Providing targeted interventions for students who may be at risk of underachievement, school absenteeism, or early school leaving, ensuring they receive the necessary academic and social support.
- Encouraging Community Engagement: Building partnerships with local community groups, organizations, and services to provide additional resources, services, and opportunities that benefit students and families.

Through these goals, the HSCL scheme aims to enhance educational outcomes and promote an inclusive, supportive environment for all students, especially those facing challenges.

## Scope of this policy

This policy aims to outline how Beaufort College's Home School Community Liaison strengthens the connection between schools, families, and the broader community to support student learning and well-being. Its scope includes several key areas:

- Establishing clear communication between schools and families.
- Sharing information on school programmes, policies, and student progress.
- Encouraging parental involvement in school activities and decisions.
- Supporting families in overcoming educational barriers.
- Providing resources for counselling, special education, and social services.
- Organising workshops in response to identified local need.
- Partnering with local organisations to enhance education.
- Promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Addressing the needs of marginalised communities.

The Home School Community Liaison Policy includes:

- Introduction
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Principles
- The work of the Home School Community Liaison scheme
- Planning
- Health and Safety
- Success Criteria

## Introduction

The Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) Scheme is a key initiative by the Department of Education and Skills in Ireland, designed to foster collaboration between parents, teachers, and community services. Its primary goal is to enhance educational outcomes by actively involving parents in their children's education and addressing factors that may impede student participation. By promoting such partnerships, the HSCL Scheme aims to create a supportive environment that encourages student retention and success, particularly within the DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) framework.

## Roles & Responsibilities of the HSCL

The Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) Coordinator plays a pivotal role in fostering partnerships between parents, schools, and communities to enhance student educational outcomes. The HSCL Coordinator's duties include:

1. **Building Relationships with Parents:** Engaging with parents through home visits, organising courses, and facilitating meetings to strengthen the home-school connection.
2. **Collaborating with School Staff:** Working alongside teachers and school leadership to identify and support students at risk of educational disadvantage.
3. **Liaising with Community Services:** Connecting families with local resources and services to address external factors affecting student learning.
4. **Promoting Parental Involvement:** Encouraging parents to participate in school activities and decision-making processes to foster a supportive educational environment.
5. **Providing Information and Support:** Offering guidance on school policies, programmes, and available supports to help parents navigate the educational system.

Through these responsibilities, the HSCL Coordinator aims to improve student attendance, participation, and retention by empowering parents and strengthening the home-school-community partnership.

## Principles

The Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) Scheme is grounded in several guiding principles aimed at fostering collaboration between homes, schools, and communities to enhance student educational outcomes:

1. **Promoting Partnership:** The scheme emphasises a collaborative approach where parents and teachers work together, sharing information, responsibilities, and decision-making to support students' education.
2. **Adopting a Unified Approach:** Integration of efforts across both primary and post-primary levels ensures a seamless support system for students throughout their educational journey.
3. **Preventative Focus:** By addressing potential challenges early, the HSCL Scheme aims to prevent educational underachievement rather than merely responding to issues after they arise.
4. **Adult-Centric Strategy:** Targeting the attitudes and behaviours of adults (parents and teachers) who influence children's lives, the scheme seeks to indirectly benefit students by empowering these key figures.
5. **Needs-Based Activities:** Initiatives within the scheme are designed based on identified needs, ensuring that interventions are relevant and effective for the specific community.
6. **Whole-School Involvement:** Adopting a whole-school approach and developing positive attitudes among teachers and school staff towards partnership is essential for the scheme's success.

7. **Fostering Self-Help and Independence:** The scheme encourages self-reliance among families, empowering them to take an active role in their children's education.
8. **Home Visitation:** Conducting home visits is essential for building trust with families, allowing coordinators to understand and address specific needs effectively.
9. **Networking and Coordination:** Collaborating with both voluntary and statutory agencies enhances the effectiveness of interventions, prevents duplication of efforts, and ensures integrated service delivery to marginalised children and their families.

These principles collectively aim to create a supportive and inclusive educational environment that addresses the diverse needs of students by actively involving and empowering the key adults in their lives.

## Relationship of the HSCL policy to other school policies & practices

The HSCL policy is closely interconnected with other school policies<sup>4</sup>, working in cooperation to create a supportive and inclusive educational environment. These include but are not limited to:

1. **Statement of Strategy for Attendance:** The HSCL scheme directly supports the school's attendance policy by addressing factors that may affect students' regular attendance, such as parental involvement, social or economic challenges, and personal concerns.
2. **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies:** Home visits and communication with families ensure that any safeguarding issues are identified and addressed early, aligning with the school's child protection protocols.
3. **Additional Educational Needs (AEN) Policy:** The HSCL scheme collaborates with the AEN team to ensure that students with additional needs receive the support and resources required both at school and at home, strengthening the home-school connection.
4. **Anti-Bullying Policy:** By fostering positive relationships between parents, teachers, and students, the HSCL policy helps to create a safe and supportive environment, which is essential for preventing and addressing bullying.
5. **Inclusion Policy:** The HSCL framework promotes inclusion by engaging with diverse communities, breaking down barriers related to language, culture, and socioeconomic status, and supporting marginalised families.
6. **Wellbeing Plan:** The HSCL coordinator's role in supporting families, addressing concerns, and providing resources links directly to the school's wellbeing strategies, helping to ensure that students' emotional and psychological needs are met.

By aligning with these policies, the HSCL scheme plays a key role in promoting student success, engagement, and overall well-being, while ensuring that the school's broader goals are met.

## The work of the Home School Community Liaison Scheme

### Home Visitation

Home visits are central to the HSCL scheme's commitment to building strong home-school partnerships. The primary goal is to enhance student engagement and retention in education. Through these visits, the HSCL coordinator brings the school's support into the home environment, making education more accessible and fostering a sense of belonging.

---

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix 1

The coordinator approaches each visit with warmth and understanding, ensuring a non-judgmental and supportive atmosphere. Listening attentively and allowing sufficient time for meaningful conversations is essential to building trust with families. These visits provide an opportunity to share relevant school information, address parental concerns, and help families feel more comfortable engaging with the school community.

A key focus of the HSCL coordinator is to dismantle any negative perceptions parents or guardians may have about the school system. By offering reassurance and practical support, they encourage positive attitudes towards education.

Referrals for home visits may come from school staff, including the principal, teachers, and care team, as well as from parents or guardians themselves. Teachers who identify concerns about a student's well-being or engagement can request a home visit to ensure additional support is provided.

### Classes and Courses for Parents

At the beginning of each school year, a needs analysis is conducted with a focus group of parents/guardians to identify areas where additional learning and support would be beneficial. These discussions help shape the courses and activities offered, ensuring they align with the interests and needs of the school community.

Parents often highlight both direct and indirect needs related to their children's education. The HSCL scheme provides courses designed to enhance life skills, build self-confidence, and empower parents as key educators in their children's lives. Activities offered include:

- Personal Development – Parenting courses, assertiveness training, and confidence-building workshops.
- Leisure Activities – Social and recreational classes that encourage community engagement.
- Educational Support – Literacy and numeracy courses to improve fundamental skills.
- Parent Support Groups – Peer-led spaces for sharing experiences, guidance, and encouragement.

By actively involving parents in their own learning, the HSCL scheme strengthens the home-school connection and fosters a more supportive educational environment for students.

### Cluster Meetings

The HSCL scheme arranges local and family cluster meetings. The schools organise themselves geographically for family clusters and meet as a City and County cluster. These meetings help co-ordinators to share resources to organise common courses for parents, to prepare transfer programmes and to share best practice. The local cluster schools are as follows:

#### **Primary Schools**

- Duleek Boys and Girls National Schools
- Navan Educate Together
- Scoil Columbanus National School
- Scoil Mhuire
- Scoil Naomh Eoin
- St Annes Primary
- St Joseph's Mercy Primary School
- St. Oliver Plunket's National School

### **Post-Primary Schools**

- Beaufort College
- Boyne Community School, Trim.
- Coláiste Clavin, Longwood
- O'Carolan College, Nobber
- St Joseph's Secondary School, Navan

The duties of the HSCL coordinator are diverse and multifaceted, encompassing a wide range of responsibilities that respond to the identified needs of the school community.

## **Planning**

The following documentation is planned and prepared by the HSCL and shared with the Principal:

- HSCL Annual Logic Model Plan
- HSCL Weekly Timetable
- HSCL Parent/Guardian One-to-One Contact form
- HSCL Annual Return Form
- HSCL Grant Expenditure
- HSCL Target List

## **Health and Safety**

The health and safety guidelines for all HSCL activities are the same as those applied in all areas of school life. In addition to those, the following guidelines are adhered to by the HSCL coordinator:

- A fully charged mobile phone accompanies the HSCL on all visits.
- The Principal/Deputy Principal and School Secretary are informed of all out-of-school activities, meetings, home visits etc.
- It is the responsibility of the HSCL coordinator to strictly adhere to these guidelines.

## **Success Criteria**

The work of the HSCL is assessed through the Key Performance Indicators outlined by TUSLA. They are as follows:

- The number of parents who are engaged through the work of the HSCL in school activities.
- The number of parents who engaged in home visits with the HSCL.
- The number of target families engaging in parent classes.
- Feedback from teachers/parents/guardian and the local community.
- Feedback from the DES Inspectorate /LMETB /TESS.
- Greater communication between home and school.
- A more positive attitude towards school from those at-risk families.
- Improved attendance of at-risk students.

## Appendix A – List of School Policies & Procedures<sup>5</sup>

- Admissions Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy\*<sup>6</sup>
- Assessment Policy
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Code of Behaviour\*
- Code of Dress\*
- Communication with Parents
- Complaints Procedure
- Data Protection
- DEIS Plan 2022-25
- Dignity at Work
- Educational Tours & Field Trips
- Healthy Eating Policy
- Health & Safety Statement
- Homework Policy
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- LMETB Suspension & Expulsion Policy & Procedures
- Long-Term Absence Protocol
- Critical Incident Management Plan
- Mobile Devices Policy\*
- Statement of Strategy for Attendance\*
- Substance Misuse Policy
- Teaching, Learning & Assessment Policy



---

<sup>5</sup> All school policies are published on the school website and are available from the school office on request.

<sup>6</sup> All policies marked with an asterisk \* are published partially/wholly in the student learning journal.



## Policy for Resolution/Ratification by LMETB Board

School	Beaufort College
Policy Title	HSCL Policy
Date of School Board of Management Meeting	17/06/2025
Please confirm if a quorum was present at the meeting (4)	Yes
Please confirm if the completed Policy Consultation Record was presented at the meeting	Yes
Policy Proposed By	Ciara Carry
Policy Seconded By	Ian Lafford
Signed	 Chairperson of Board of Management
Date	17/06/25
Signed	 Principal
Date	17/06/25