

Category: Teacher & Student Interaction

After-School Study Club for 12-15 year olds



Toolkit
**Successful Learning
Practices for
All Children to Thrive**



POLICIES AND PRACTICES BASED ON SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH FOR REDUCING UNDERACHIEVEMENT AND EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING IN EUROPE



Red Barnet, MHPSS Collaborative



Acknowledgments

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Introduction

This toolkit, “Successful Learning Practices for All Children to Thrive,” is a practical resource that shows how to create successful learning environments in classrooms, schools, and communities. It helps teachers and school leaders build effective learning spaces that improve basic skills, support struggling students, and develop children’s social and emotional skills. The toolkit is based on 20 case studies from 9 European countries, offering practical strategies that have worked in real schools.

These case studies come from primary and secondary schools across Europe that have successfully helped underachieving students and prevented early school leaving. The research was conducted in diverse schools across Portugal, Ireland, Finland, Denmark, Spain, Greece, Italy, the United Kingdom, and Malta. From these schools, we gathered concrete practices that improve both academic learning and social-emotional development.

The toolkit is organised around five key areas of successful learning environments:

Pedagogies

Teacher and Student Interaction

Peer Collaboration

School – Family – Community
Collaboration

Wellbeing and Support

While each tool is placed in one of these areas, many tools work across multiple areas. For instance, “Interactive Groups” not only helps students work together but also connects with the community, supports wellbeing, and improves academic results.

It’s important to understand that the most successful schools use multiple tools together. While each tool can help on its own, the best results come from working on all five areas across the whole school. We recommend looking at your school’s current strengths and areas for improvement to help you choose the most useful tools for your situation.

This toolkit is available as an online platform in seven languages: Spanish, Portuguese, English, Finnish, Maltese, Greek, and Italian. All the tools have been carefully tested and developed through dialogic co-creation with nearly 1,000 participants in the SCIREARLY project, including school staff, students, families, and community members.

Our aim is to give educators and communities the tools they need to help every child succeed in school. By sharing successful practices from different learning environments in an accessible way, we’re working to create schools where all children can thrive, regardless of their background.





Glossary

A glossary section is essential in this toolkit to provide clear definitions of key terms and concepts, ensuring that all users, including teachers, school leaders, education experts, policymakers, and community members, can fully understand and effectively implement the successful teaching and learning practices. This section helps bridge any gaps in terminology and ensures consistent understanding, making it easier to apply the evidence-based strategies and improve educational outcomes for students.

Dialogic Teaching and Learning

Dialogic teaching and learning emphasises dialogue and quality interactions as the primary means of achieving understanding, learning and development. A dialogic approach to teaching and learning aims at creating an environment where all students, teachers and other members of the community actively engage in meaningful and respectful dialogue. Here are some of the key premises:

Ensuring that everybody's voice is valued equally, and everyone has the opportunity to contribute to the dialogue. This encourages diverse perspectives and ensures that all voices are heard.

Recognising and valuing the cultural backgrounds and experiences of all students and teachers. This helps to create a more inclusive and understanding learning environment.

Dialogic interactions among students, teacher-student and within the community are oriented towards transforming the sociocultural context and create optimal conditions for learning and development.

Co-constructing meaning and understanding through dialogues between students and teachers. This collaborative process helps deepen comprehension and retention of information.



Building a sense of community and mutual support among students and teachers. This principle fosters collaboration and collective responsibility for learning.

Respecting and valuing differences among students and teachers. Dialogue should celebrate diversity and use it as a resource for learning. Encouraging critical thinking and challenging everyone to think deeply and question assumptions.

Emotional Dimension

Recognising the importance of quality relationships in learning. Successful practices create a supportive environment where students and teachers feel safe, supported and confident to express their emotions and experiences.

Authentic Learning

Ensuring that the dialogue and learning are relevant to the students' and teachers' real-life experiences and contexts. This makes the learning more meaningful and applicable.

Translanguaging

When one person speaks in one language while another person responds in another.

Reception Classes

Classes where children with another mother tongue are in specialised classes where translanguaging is used to help children learn the host country language - with the intention that the children enter mainstream education as they gain language proficiency.

After-School Study Club for 12-15 year olds

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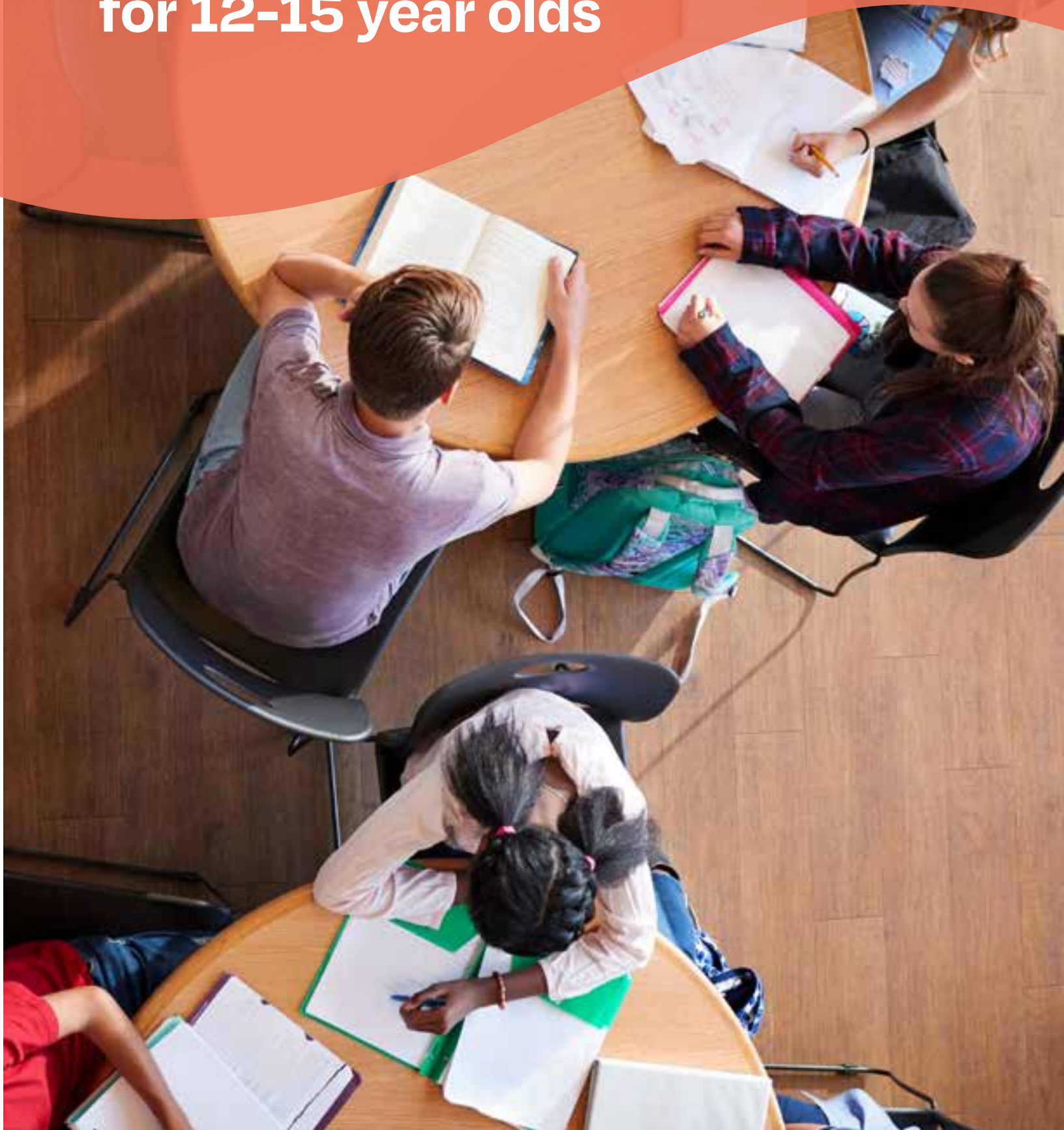
Overview:

The After-School Study Club creates a structured setting where teenagers can focus on their studies, complete homework, and access academic support. The tool features a blend of independent study, group activities, and one-to-one personalised tutoring to meet various learning needs. This club fosters a positive and engaging environment where students can concentrate on their work and collaborate with their peers. Additionally, it offers a wide range of learning resources, such as textbooks, online repositories and educational materials. This afternoon club aims to create a nurturing atmosphere that promotes academic development and helps students build effective study habits, manage their time efficiently, and gain a deeper understanding of their coursework. There is significant flexibility in how schools choose to run the club, including what subject areas to cover and how frequently it is organised. Beyond academic support through reinforcement and enrichment activities, after-school programmes can provide opportunities for participation in sports and other extracurricular pursuits. These activities have been found to lower dropout rates, especially for students who are at risk of academic failure (Cosden et al., 2004). As Lacey (2016) notes, students who engage in after-school academic and extracurricular programmes demonstrate improved social attitudes and behaviour, increased self-confidence, and a decreased likelihood of engaging in delinquent activities. These programmes help students build meaningful relationships with both adults and peers, promoting significant social and emotional growth.

This tool aims to:

- improve students' academic performance,
- enhance study skills, and
- foster a positive attitude towards learning.

Targeting 12-15-year-olds, this tool is available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, Finnish, Maltese, Greek and Italian, covering subjects/areas based on students' needs. It can be implemented in schools, community centres, and libraries.





Implementation Steps:

Preparation:

- Secure a suitable location equipped with necessary study materials and technology.
- Recruit qualified educators and volunteers who can assist students.
- Develop a schedule that accommodates students' school and extracurricular activities.
- Organise worksheets, texts, and books according to the study plan/schedule.
- Organise afternoon snacks for students.

Implementation:

- Announce the programme to students and parents, highlighting the benefits.
- Organise study sessions with a mix of independent study, group work, and one-on-one tutoring.
- Provide a variety of resources, including textbooks, online databases, and study guides.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

- Track students' attendance and academic progress through regular assessments.
- Solicit feedback from students, parents, and educators to identify areas for improvement.
- Use this feedback to adjust the programme as needed to better meet students' needs.

Examples and Case Studies:

Case Study 1: The [Rialto Youth Project](#) has created an integrated after-school support structure that sees a homework club sit at the heart of a range of supports offered to young people in an area of high social deprivation. The outcomes listed are positive in terms of their personal and academic development and the nature of the project shows how a homework club can act as a catalyst for other developments.

Case Study 2: The [Sunnyside After-School Club](#) shows how a structured, supported and future-focused set of interventions can help change what was a relatively haphazard after-schools club into a highly organised, successful and above all participative space that puts the needs of children first.





Challenges:

Some initial challenges include:

- Balancing diverse academic needs and maintaining consistent attendance. These could be mitigated by offering personalised support and incentives for regular attendance.
- Finding time and space in an already busy educational context.

These might be addressed by:

- Collectively identifying and designating an after-school space within a school building OR moving afterschool activities to a different though connected space (e.g community centre etc).
- Providing formal time for teachers / support staff involved that is acknowledged in their other work commitments.
- Securing adequate funding and resources for the programme. This could be addressed by meticulously managing student welfare funds, pursuing grants, sponsorships, and community collaborations.
- Ensuring qualified and motivated staff are available to run the programme. This can be managed by offering professional development opportunities and recognising staff contributions.
- Engaging parents and caregivers to support their children's participation. This might involve organising informational sessions and regular communication to highlight the programme's benefits.
- Addressing students' varied levels of motivation and engagement. This can be handled by incorporating interactive and interest-based learning activities to keep students engaged.

Benefits:

Enhanced Academic Performance: After-school study clubs provide students with additional time and resources to focus on their studies, leading to measurable improvements in their grades and study habits. By having access to structured study time and educational support, students can tackle challenging subjects with more confidence and competence. Research has shown that students who participate in after-school study programmes often see significant boosts in their academic performance, as these clubs offer targeted assistance that complements their regular classroom learning.

Positive Learning Environment: The study club fosters a supportive and motivating atmosphere where students can collaborate and learn from each other. This positive learning environment encourages students to engage more deeply with their studies and promotes a sense of community and belonging. The presence of knowledgeable tutors and mentors provides students with guidance and encouragement, helping them to stay focused and motivated.





Tips for Success:

Practical Tips:

- Establish a consistent schedule and clear expectations for students.
- Provide diverse resources to cater for different learning styles and subjects.
- Ensure adequate supervision and support from qualified staff.
- Create a welcoming and inclusive environment to encourage student participation.
- Gather regular feedback from students and parents to improve the programme.

Address Common Pitfalls:

- Ensure regular communication with parents to keep them engaged and informed.
- Adapt the programme based on feedback to continuously improve its effectiveness.
- Ensure that student voice is paramount.
- Provide additional training and support for students.

Additional Resources:

Worksheets: <https://ezymathtutoring.com.au/resources/worksheets/>
<https://englishforeveryone.org/Topics/Reading-Comprehension.html>

Guides: <https://www.mathplanet.com/>, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/subjects/z6vg9j6>

Online Tutorials: <https://www.khanacademy.org/>, <https://schoolyourself.org/>

Reports: Accelerated Reading Programme <https://www.blessedtrinitycollege.com/accelerated-reading>

Youth Development Programme <https://www.ashtoncentre.com/services/youth-development/>

Arts Academy <https://www.newlodgearts.com/academy>

After School <https://www.weechicks.com/after-schools-club-north-belfast/>

Write Club <https://www.fightingwords.co.uk/write-club>

Conclusion:

Key Points and Takeaways:

- The Afterschool Study Club supports teenagers' academic growth and encourages the development of effective study habits.
- Continuous monitoring and feedback are essential for the programme's success.
- Educators are encouraged to adapt the tool to their specific contexts and explore additional resources to maximise the programme's impact.





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