

Brief Guide to Intervention Strategies

This guide offers a **thumbnail view** of each of the **13 tried-and-tested strategies** for supporting young people to avoid NEET status or re-engage with education and work.

Please see the **full Intervention handbook** for more detail on how you might develop this intervention in your own setting, for further reading and resources.



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Action 1: Personalised plans	
Aim	To encourage young people to steer their own educational pathway by helping them develop a personalised support plan.
Description	Designed jointly by tutors and young people, personalised plans identify the young person's interests and goals, plus any education and training needs, or barriers that must be overcome on their journey towards this. The plan also includes support to equip young people with tools to improve their sense of well-being and develop positive attitudes to learning, education and training. To be successful, these plans need young peoples' active engagement and ownership, encouraging them to feel more in control of their lives and providing them with the skills to plan and manage their future careers.
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road map: map out where the student currently is, where they want to get to, and what 'routes' could be taken to overcome (or bypass) the 'barriers' in a young person's life. Consider planning for alternatives and • Regular reviews: review the plan frequently and amend as required in line with the young person's development and feedback. • Contracts: encouraging young people to sign the 'contract' of their personalised support plan can formalise the commitment and motivate them to be more invested.

Action 2: Blended media mentoring	
Aim	To provide students with one-to-one mentor support using a range of methods including face-to-face, email and social media.
Description	Quality mentoring implies a relationship built on trust, continuity and commitment of the mentor. Strategies include; eliciting young people's interests and talents, therapeutic listening, advocating, boundary-setting, and apologising when wrong. Negotiation between the young person and mentor is essential when agreeing on mentoring goals and tailoring activities to help the young person achieve these. Mentoring is underpinned by regular contact, via face-to-face meeting, and social media platforms such as SMS, WhatsApp, or Skype. The mentor should also be well positioned in order to signpost relevant training, and long-term support.
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mind map: a pictorial and/or textual account of the young person's starting situation, enabling them to visualise and document the starting point for mentoring. • Trust building: the mentor to model a relationship based on respect and compassion. Trust cannot be requested at the outset but is worked on and achieved on the part of both mentor and mentee. Finding out about each individuals' preference over mode(s) of contact is a key part of developing a trusting and supportive relationship. • Regular contact: regular contact via face-to-face and social media helps the young person feel that they are cared for and have a champion.

Action 3: Personal development activities to engage young people in learning	
Aim	To engage young people in activities to improve their self-concept, helping them to see themselves as a valued learner and feel a sense of belonging in the educational or training setting.
Description	Activities designed to counter previous negative schooling experiences, motivate, inspire and break down barriers young people may feel towards their cohort or educators. Measures to build motivation can help to build trust in their capabilities and interest in education and training. These activities are particularly useful to re-engage those who are highly disengaged from education and training, and at-risk students showing signs of low motivation. The activities should engage young people by strengthening their self-confidence and reigniting an interest in learning at the outset of their education/training.
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community involvement: activities to engage and motivate young people that are situated in and require the involvement of the community (e.g. local employers or organisations). • Student co-ops: local enterprise projects to address the improvement of the community where part of the profits or gains are directly invested into the locality. • Students' voice panel: regular meetings between school leaders and young people for representatives to bring the concerns and queries from their cohorts and oversee actions.

Action 4: Peer-to-peer learning and support	
Aim	To facilitate support and social interaction with a peer from a similar cohort, who acts as a positive role model and offers counsel, resources, skills and advice.
Description	Young people are best equipped to relate to other young people and the power dynamic is more egalitarian than with an adult. Peer learning occurs when students learn collaboratively, while peer support benefits the learning and confidence of both peer and mentor. For this strategy, peers should ideally both be learners in the educational setting, be broadly equal in terms of achievement level or status, and each get something educationally beneficial out of the collaboration. Mentors can address issues affecting learning, and provide young people with the confidence, resources, and skills needed to thrive.
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer tutoring or peer mentoring programmes: Training programmes based on matching peer mentors with mentees in one-on-one relationships so they can provide guidance and support. • Proctor model: Senior students tutoring junior students. The senior student could be: a) an older student from a higher grade level; b) a more skilled student helping a less skilled student in the same class. • Peer support groups: Also known as peer study groups, these groups tend to take place outside of the teacher's presence and are often organized by peers themselves.

Action 5: Family support and engagement	
Aim	To increase parental/family knowledge of the curriculum, education and training and promote family engagement in their child's education and community participation.
Description	This strategy focuses on demonstrating that the education provider cares about and understands the pressures on families. This is key to getting families to engage in their child's learning. In demonstrating care, this action also involves informing parents about the choices available for their children and giving them tools to support their children's educational choices. Strategies include: demonstrating care towards parents; facilitating consistent boundary-setting between school and home; sharing young people's achievements between school and home; promoting home-visits or communication. Guidance should recognise that most families want to support their children's learning but do not know how.
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive Contact home: proactively phoning, emailing or messaging home with positives and praise to build trust and start dialogue with families. • Family Support Worker: a dedicated outreach role where the FSW is familiar with the local community and the barriers that key groups of young people and families face to learning. • Parent-School Connection Sessions: opportunities for parents to learn new skills, develop positive relationships with the school/other parents, build self-confidence and learn more about the school and the curriculum.

Action 6. Support for young people's learning outside of the formal curriculum	
Aim	To provide school support for young people's learning outside of the formal curriculum, either within or outside of the school.
Description	These actions consider the non-academic aspects of children's learning and development that contribute to school reinforcement (promoting educational value). They support young people's integration (belonging) and aim to combine educational leisure pursuits with school support and the development of core skills. Optimal school support for young people's learning outside of the formal curriculum requires sustainable alliances between schools and social and educational support organisations. It therefore extends the strictly academic remit of the educational relationship and involves non-formal learning partners.
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework club in school: space for young people to work in a supportive environment outside of school hours, with an adult to advise, signpost resources and information points. • Extra-curricular activities: (e.g. sport, music, arts, language) outside of school hours, voluntary, disconnected from formal learning outcomes, and without overloading young people . • Workshops for study techniques: to build study habits, learning techniques and tools to improve their learning process and help them to enjoy their leisure time.

Action 7: Establishing links within the wider community	
Aim	To improve relations between the educational setting and the local community and environment, with the shared objective of young people's social and educational development.
Description	Building relationships between the educational setting and the local community must be founded upon a co-responsibility for enabling individual and collective social and educational development. This strategy should involve the active participation of all agents (educators, community citizens and young people) according to shared educational goals. The commitment of educational centres to the local community and to the environment helps to generate a common educational project, in which collectively negotiated values are shared. In this regard, educational centres can be institutions that promote young people's learning about social and educational inclusion, social justice and democratic values.
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking: strengthening interpersonal networks between peers, educational associations or organisations (internal or external to the educational centre) and local services. • Study visits: visiting local companies, institutions, employers where students can have direct contact with the local labour market. • Work-skills sessions with local employers: to highlight the importance of key skills, academic qualifications and educational/ training experiences for the local labour market.

Action 8: Learning Pathway and Careers Guidance	
Aim	Supporting motivated, informed career-choices and flexible education routes that enable young people to adapt their learning pathway into the labour market to their interests and abilities.
Description	Curriculum guidance for the labour market consists of structured developmental experiences presented systematically through classroom and small group activities for students. It is closely related to career guidance through activities that aim to support individuals to make educational, training and occupational choices that match their personal characteristics (e.g. strengths, learning style, etc.). It also involves <i>flexible education and training</i> , which refers to the provision of educational and training choices to young people and not closing doors. Careers guidance and flexible education requires the involvement of the Educational Administration.
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rubber boundaries: behavioural management systems that can accommodate individual challenges, including alternative arrangements to suspension or expulsion from school (e.g. managed moves) • Quality assurance on Vocational Education and Training: ensure that local VET pathways can lead to progression. • Second chance measures: opportunities to return to mainstream education having previously 'dropped out'.

Action 9: Responsive crisis resolution for young people	
Aim	Services that respond to the causes and consequences of young peoples' disruptive behaviours through individual therapeutic support for children's emotional wellbeing.
Description	Responsive crisis resolution services are short-term counselling interventions to resolve immediate conflicts/problems, respond to crisis events, and intervene in school-specific situations that disrupt learning. School staff, parents/family, community members and students can initiate responsive services. Responsive services can also contribute to alternative learning arrangements preferential to out-of-school suspension and expulsion. They should be combined with measures to promote behavioural change and allow the student to continue academic instruction. Procedures should ideally be orientated to supporting behaviour or emotional wellbeing in order to enable return to the regular classroom (not be a long-term solution).
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courses to promote social and emotional skills: topics could include: conflict resolution, gender discrimination, sexual harassment, alcohol/drug use, inappropriate language. • Restorative justice or mediation approaches to social relational challenges or bullying: working with young people to aid their communication in response to social issues. • Short-term counselling for specific events or circumstances: for example, for family separation and reconstituted families, eating disorders, and addictions.

Action 10: Improving teaching practice: inclusive and participatory pedagogy	
Aim	To provide training in pedagogic strategies, resources, and assessment practices to be used in the classroom to promote active learning and educational success for diverse learners.
Description	This strategy aims to raise teachers' awareness of the importance of practical learning experiences in promoting students' motivation and interest in learning. Training focuses on pedagogical strategies that foster the use of practical activities such as: differentiated learning tasks; digital technologies in the classroom; continuous assessment strategies; active teaching and learning methodologies. Sessions can involve face-to-face as well as e-learning activities. Collaboration is emphasised through the sharing of professional experiences and good practices among teachers.
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital technologies: computer-based tools to create roadmaps and timeline (strategy 1); minds maps (strategy 2); Blogs, etc. • Dynamic activities for the classroom: games with images (rather than textual focus) where participants describe the images and reflect on the emerging concepts; videos to explore concepts. • Activities to explore current youth issues: workshops on health and wellbeing themes suggested by students, e.g. sexuality, food, sustainability.

Action 11: Support with mid-term and end of key-stage transitions	
Aim	To give young people personalised support to deal with the risks and difficulties of transitioning between educational institutions.
Description	Young people are at particular risk of disengaging from education/training in the period before, during and immediately following an educational transition. Key-stage transitions usually involve the whole student cohort, while 'mid-term' transitions are frequently individual and occur outside of the normal admission/exit point at the educational setting. Support focuses on ensuring young people experiencing transitions (planned and unplanned) positively, before, during, and following the transition. Support involves working with stakeholders; teachers, administrators, leadership teams (in both sending and receiving institutions), parents/carers, friends and peers. This action is best carried out by a designated person.
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel Training: familiarising the young person with bus routes or travel plans to arrive at new locations (e.g. work experience). • Warm handover: when a tutor accompanies a young person to a new education/training setting on their first point of contact and/or first day, and introduces them to a point of contact in the new setting. • School-community directory where each new student has an entry: this is important so that outgoing and incoming students can feel that they have a legacy at the school.

Action 12: Promoting inclusive learning environments and alternative learning arrangements	
Aim	To promote an inclusive learning environment in both formal learning institutions and 'alternative provision' settings (e.g. Vocational Education and Training, and non-formal education providers).
Description	Young people at risk of EL often find it difficult to engage with the formal learning environment of school or college and so may experience school/college as isolating or inappropriate to their learning needs. This action is therefore specifically aimed at those young people for whom full-time formal education/training is difficult or not appropriate. This action is best achieved through the leadership of an identified person who has knowledge of the inclusivity of formal learning environments, the power to address and influence this and for co-ordinating alternative learning arrangements.
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 'safe space' in school: the young person can visit when feeling overwhelmed or in need of support. Ideally this would be an enclosed room with therapeutic resources to alleviate anxiety. • Visual and audio stimulating learning environment: this can provoke an emotional response that helps learning (e.g., joy, calm). • A contract of participation: to identify a young person's aspirations, objectives, motivations and purpose for participation, as well as the educator's expectations.

Action 13: Support in building and navigating healthy peer relationships	
Aim	To support young people in building and maintaining positive and healthy peer relationships, including friendships, learning and co-working relationships and romantic relationships.
Description	One of the key barriers to dropping out of education/training is the social challenges young people face in building and navigating healthy relationships with peers. Early friendship experiences have a significant impact on future relationships, particularly in how young people learn to trust and become trustworthy. This action aims to support young people to 'build healthy peer relationships' and 'do friendship'. This involves: help to recognise features of healthy/unhealthy relationships; support in ending unhealthy relationships and building new relationships; help navigating issues such as conflict, personal boundaries and juggling social demands with school/work expectations.
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social and emotional education that recognises the reciprocal dynamics of friendship: this includes a critical lens on social and emotional learning programmes that focus narrowly on individual skills/competencies and overlook the ways in which relationships are co-produced. • Education programmes that focus on collective values: values to focus on are negotiated with young people but could include respect, empathy, social boundaries and tolerance. • Transparent, consistent, student-reviewed anti-bullying policy: this recognises the various forms bullying takes (e.g. physical, verbal, 'cyber', 'relational' and 'micro' aggressions).