



AN ROINN | DEPARTMENT OF
OIDEACHAIS | EDUCATION
AGUS SCILEANNA | AND SKILLS

*Education Strategy for the
Children Detention School Service
September 2010-2013*

Department of Education and Skills

In this statement of strategy–

“Children detention school” has the meaning assigned to it by section 3(1) of the Children Act 2001 (as amended by section 122 of the Criminal Justice Act 2006);

"CPD" refers to Continuing Professional Development for teachers;

“Department of Education and Science” was renamed Department of Education and Skills as of 2 May 2010. In this document it is referred to as the Department of Education and Skills;

"Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform" was renamed Department of Justice and Law Reform as of 1 June 2010. In this document it is referred to as Department of Justice and Law Reform;

“Director” has the meaning assigned to it by section 180 of the Children Act 2001;

“Education facility” means that part of a children detention school, engaged in the delivery of education services in accordance with section 159A of the Children Act 2001 (as inserted by section 147 of the Criminal Justice Act 2006);

“HSE” means the Health Service Executive established under section 6 of the Health Act 2004;

“TYJS” means the Irish Youth Justice Service, an executive office of the Department of Justice and Law Reform;

“NCCA” means the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment established under section 39 of the Education Act 1998;

“NEPS” means the National Educational Psychological Service, a service of the Department of Education and Skills;

“NEWB” means the National Educational Welfare Board established under section 9 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000;

“OMCYA” means the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs;

“Principal” means Principal of an education facility;

“VEC” means a Vocational Education Committee;

"YPP" means Young Persons' Probation, a division of the Probation and Welfare Service working with young people under 18 who come before the Courts.

INTRODUCTION

Scope

The *Education Strategy for the Children Detention School Service September 2010-2013* has been operating in draft form from 2008 and has evolved to the document it is now. It constitutes the Department of Education and Skills' (DES) overarching strategy on educational services for children placed in children detention schools and provides an outline of the Department's role in this sector and provides the broad parameters which inform educational provision in the education facilities attached to these detention schools.

Background

In December 2005, following a review carried out by the Department of Justice and Law Reform, the Government approved a programme of Youth Justice reforms specifically designed to restructure the youth justice service in Ireland into a more modern and streamlined service.

Among the principal measures agreed in this reform programme were:

- The establishment of a new Youth Justice Service in the Department of Justice and Law Reform.
- The transfer of responsibility for the detention of children¹ in children detention schools from the DES to the Irish Youth Justice Service (IYJS). Responsibility for St Joseph's, Clonmel transferred to the Health Service Executive.
- Amendments to the Criminal Justice Act 2006 to introduce necessary changes to the Children Act 2001, including changes in the way education is provided for in children detention schools. Educational provision is now a direct statutory responsibility of the local vocational education committee (VEC) as this reflects better the needs of the age cohort of the children in question.
- The development by the DES of an overarching strategy on education in the service.

Children Detention School Context

Following the recommendations of the Expert Group on Children Detention Schools, on 4 March 2008 the Government approved proposals to develop a single national children detention school at Oberstown, Lusk, Co. Dublin, incorporating the three children detention schools on the site. Finglas Child and Adolescent Centre was the only children detention school not on the site and following the recommendations of a review group its closure took place on 31 March 2010 by order of the Minister of Justice Equality and Law Reform.

Subsequent to the closure of Finglas Child and Adolescent Centre three children detention schools remain in the State. These are Oberstown Boys School, Oberstown Girls School and Trinity House School. All three are situated in Oberstown, Lusk, Co. Dublin.

¹ Females under 18 years and males under 16 years on admission

There are two education centres attached to the children detention schools, one of which is situated in Trinity House School and the other is shared between Oberstown Boys School and Oberstown Girls School. Educational provision in both of these centres is the responsibility of Co. Dublin VEC.

The development of a single national children detention school in Oberstown is currently underway and it is planned to incorporate a centralised education centre. Education provision in this centre will remain the responsibility of Co. Dublin VEC.

Meeting the specific needs of these children

At the request of the DES, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) prepared a framework for, and guidelines on, curriculum and assessment in the detention and care settings. Both the framework and guidelines and this strategy reflect the belief that the best educational interests of the child are paramount. They have also taken into account the background and experiences of the learners involved. This is characterised in many cases by a combination of the following elements:

- Frequent periods of absenteeism during their schooling
- Poor experience of the transition from primary to post-primary schooling
- Marginalisation and disengagement leading to underachievement in mainstream school settings
- Significant difficulties in the areas of basic literacy and numeracy
- The presence of behavioural and emotional problems

Given the age of the learners placed in these settings, along with the characteristics outlined above and the changing nature of the education programmes on offer over the last number of years, the DES recognises that the education of children in children detention schools ought to be the responsibility of the local VEC as this reflects better the needs of these particular learners. The Children Act 2001 (as amended by the Criminal Justice Act 2006) recognises this by placing statutory responsibility for education of children in children detention schools on the relevant local VEC. Currently, all three children detention schools are in the Co. Dublin area and as such come under the responsibility of Co. Dublin VEC. For this reason Co. Dublin VEC is specifically referred to throughout this document.

Effective and efficient delivery of service

This document sets out a number of goals and how these will be achieved over the next 3 years, having regard to the role of the DES, Co. Dublin VEC and the various other Government Departments and agencies in delivering these goals. Attached to each goal is a number of strategies/actions and stated outputs.

The implementation and success of this strategy is dependent on the commitment and work not only of the DES and Co. Dublin VEC but also of other agencies working together to deliver their services in a coordinated, effective and timely manner. In this regard the DES recognises, in particular, the importance of the need for close co-operation and co-ordination of services at a local level between the teaching and care staff employed in each children detention school.

Implementation of this strategy, along with the National Youth Justice Strategy 2008–2010 of the IYJS, will be monitored at national level by the National Youth Justice Oversight Group, which the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (OMCYA) has established in order to ensure effective implementation and to facilitate the cross-agency collaboration needed to achieve this. The Oversight Group includes representatives from all relevant Government departments, criminal justice agencies and other appropriate agencies.

Improving the quality of children's lives

This strategy document is intended to give clear expression to a commitment to enhancing the status and improving the quality of children's lives through integrated delivery of services. It seeks to promote a whole child/whole system approach to meeting the needs of this particular group of children and providing a focus on better outcomes for these children and their families.

ROLE OF CO. DUBLIN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Under section 159A of the Children Act 2001 (as inserted by section 147 of the Criminal Justice Act 2006), Co. Dublin VEC must provide for the education of children placed in the children detention schools.

This function is the statutory responsibility of Co. Dublin VEC due to the fact that all three children detention schools are situated in Co. Dublin. This is discharged through the education facility's board of management (which is a sub-committee of the VEC), the principal and the teachers.

In meeting their statutory obligations in respect of children detention schools Co. Dublin VEC, with the support of the DES, will, within the resources available to them, seek to–

- Meet the diverse educational needs of children placed in children detention schools
- Provide educational progression support for each of the children in children detention schools
- Manage and deliver services in an open and transparent manner
- Work in partnership with other Government departments, statutory agencies and other interested groups in order to maximise the educational opportunities available to children in children detention schools
- Achieve excellence through ensuring that planning and evaluation are an integral part of all aspects of the education services provided to children placed in children detention schools
- Ensure that policies and actions are based on the concepts of equality and fairness
- Encourage and accommodate educational innovation and development in relation to meeting the needs of children placed in children detention schools
- Undertake and support research and development initiatives to assist the development of policy and practice
- Develop effective consultation processes with the IYJS and other stakeholders as necessary
- Support the professional development of education staff
- Engage with other organisations in co-ordinating educational services that address the educational access, transfer and progression needs of these children
- Ensure accountability and responsibility at all levels within the services provided
- Deliver the necessary educational services in an efficient and effective manner

PURPOSE

The purpose of this strategy is to enable the DES in close co-operation with Co. Dublin VEC, Government Departments, statutory agencies and other relevant agencies to:

- provide a comprehensively designed education service for children in detention
- facilitate and support the development of high quality child-centred learning opportunities for each of the children placed in children detention schools
- support the creation of a positive learning environment in which children placed in these detention schools can purposefully progress towards fulfilling their social, emotional, academic, creative, artistic, cultural and other relevant education potential

In delivering on this statement of purpose, the following considerations are important:

- The best education interests of the child are the primary consideration
- Education is a key response to addressing the social inclusion and rehabilitation needs of these children
- Children availing of these educational facilities must be provided with educational and learning opportunities in a flexible and responsive manner that best suits their learning needs
- They must experience safe and stimulating education environments and spaces
- They have a right to experience education and learning opportunities that will enable them to understand, and further direct them to achieving, their full educational potential
- Equality and fairness must inform the development of policies and actions in relation to children availing of these educational facilities
- Suitable and fully qualified education staff are the most important resource in providing a high quality education service to children in these educational facilities
- Collaboration and co-operation with other Government departments and agencies, directly involved in the welfare of these children, offers the best opportunity to meet, in an effective and efficient manner, the educational needs of children in these educational facilities

HIGH LEVEL GOALS

In pursuit of this stated purpose and in providing assistance and support to the Co. Dublin VEC, the Department has set the following high-level goals:

Goal 1: Promote and support educational innovation, creativity and change

Co. Dublin VEC, with the support of the DES and the NCCA, will promote and support the development of innovative and creative responses to the learning needs of children in children detention schools.

Goal 2: Provide for a quality, learner - centred teaching and learning

Co. Dublin VEC, with the support of the DES, will ensure that a quality, learner - centred education service is provided within the children detention schools.

Goal 3: Develop productive partnerships

Co. Dublin VEC, with the support of the DES, within a whole child/whole system policy framework, will seek to develop and enhance existing partnerships and to forge new alliances with relevant agencies at national and international level that will best help meet and improve the educational needs of children in children detention schools.

Goal 4: Provide training and facilitate planning to support the teaching and learning environment

Co. Dublin VEC, with the support of the DES, will continue to make available training and other opportunities for teaching staff, to ensure the provision of an appropriate teaching and learning environment in children detention schools.

Goal 1: Promote and support educational innovation, creativity and change

Co. Dublin VEC, with the support of the DES and the NCCA, will promote and support the development of innovative and creative responses to the learning needs of children in children detention schools.

Strategies/Actions		Outputs
1.1	Develop structures and mechanisms to facilitate the integration of educational, care and related services	Appropriate structures and mechanisms in place
1.2	Subject to available resources, establish a full calendar year education service for children in detention.	Examine the existing arrangements already in place in other similar settings Resources and arrangements in place Implementation of a summer education programme in each education facility
1.3	Preparation by the NCCA of a framework for, and guidelines on, curriculum and assessment provision, encompassing personal development, in detention	Publication of the Curriculum Framework and Guidelines for Children Detention Schools
1.4	Implementation of the education framework and guidelines	Phased implementation directed and supported by Co. Dublin VEC
1.5	Subject to available resources NCCA to review the education framework from time to time	Report of the review of the education framework published and released
1.6	Engage the Psychological Support Services of Co. Dublin VEC in the provision of its services to the education facilities of the Detention Schools and ensure the ongoing support of the DES in the provision of same	Development of a clear protocol and strategy in relation to the delivery of psychological support services to students Development and delivery of a CPD programme to teachers in relation to embedding learning support
1.7	Engage with the National Education Psychological Services (NEPS) in relation to the provision of appropriate learning support structures for children in detention schools.	Guidelines in relation to an appropriate learning support structure and service for children in detention facilities Enhanced service through the development of appropriate linkages with NEPS

	Strategies/Actions	Outputs
1.8	Develop and design strategies to meet the needs of learners with special educational needs who are resident in detention in consultation with NEPS	Appropriate SEN screening in place Appropriate SEN Strategies developed and in operation following an examination of strategies currently in place in primary, second level and Youthreach
1.9	Engage Co. Dublin VEC Youth Services in consultation relating to the provision of appropriate supports and services to the overall education provision within the detention facilities	Provision of appropriate services and supports during summer and other periods that will enhance and complement the existing campus wide education and care programmes.
1.10	In partnership with other services e.g. IYJS, YPP, HSE, NEWB, seek to promote and support out-of-school learning opportunities (step down) for a period in advance of a child leaving care from individual detention settings	Agreed implementation plan for out-of-school learning opportunities in each setting Children attending out-of-school learning centres in advance of leaving
1.11	Seek to provide the necessary supports, with the assistance of the NEWB, Co. Dublin VEC and other relevant stakeholders, for the re-integration of children, on leaving detention, into the education system	Agreed protocols and procedures in place, with relevant organisations, for the progression of students into the education system
1.12	Support and encourage the development of strategies designed to meet the needs of pupils with significant English language deficits.	Strategies developed in co-operation with care staff in each detention setting Where necessary, allocate language support teaching hours for children whose first language is not English

Goal 2: Provide for a quality, learner - centred teaching and learning

Co. Dublin VEC, with the support of the DES, will ensure that a quality, learner - centred education service is provided within the children detention schools.

Strategies/Actions		Outputs
2.1	<p>Promote and support the development of the Whole School Planning and Self Evaluation processes as recommended by the DES.</p> <p>In line with the guidelines for whole school planning, ensure that the appropriate mechanisms for incorporating the views and interest of parents and guardians are in place</p>	<p>The implementation of whole school planning and self evaluation processes</p> <p>Whole schools plans in place, agreed and communicated to the necessary structures and stakeholders</p> <p>Involvement of those in loco parentis in the above through the appropriate structures</p>
2.2	Evaluation by DES Inspectorate of each children detention school	Evaluation undertaken by Inspectorate
2.3	Ensure that the literacy, numeracy and IT skills needs of each child placed in detention are given priority	<p>Enhanced ICT facilities in education facilities</p> <p>Literacy, numeracy and IT skills policies and procedures developed</p>
2.4	Support the life skills programme in partnership with other relevant agencies working in detention	Identified needs supported
2.5	Ensure that the range of education programmes on offer in detention leads to appropriate awards within the National Framework of Qualifications	All education programmes on offer are recognised within the National Qualifications Framework
2.6	Support continuing professional development strategies for management and teaching staff that promote quality assurance	<p>Quality Assurance training and support in place for management and teachers</p> <p>FETAC quality assurance in place.</p>

Strategies/Actions		Outputs
2.7	Work to develop a comprehensive education information and guidance service, incorporating mentoring, available to each child placed in detention and developed in partnership with other relevant agencies working in detention	Guidance policy in place in each centre Teacher of Guidance hours provided to each education facility and provision of guidance available to students
2.8	Ensure that mechanisms are developed to facilitate ongoing effective monitoring and review of each child's educational progress within her/his individual placement plan	Monitoring and review procedure in place
2.9	Seek to ensure that existing education plans are implemented (with amendment if appropriate) and that each child is provided with an education plan and that this transfers with her/him to their next education setting	Education plans implemented, developed for each child and, where appropriate, in accordance with the EPSEN Act.
2.10	Ensure that the necessary structures and communication channels are in place to keep parents and guardians informed of children's progress within the education facilities	Presence as appropriate of education staff at case conferences Regular individual progress reports as appropriate.

Goal 3: Develop productive partnerships

Co. Dublin VEC, with the support of the DES, within a whole child/whole system policy framework, will seek to develop and enhance existing partnerships and to forge new alliances with relevant agencies at national and international level that will best help meet and improve the educational needs of children in children detention schools.

Strategies/Actions		Outputs
3.1	Agree protocols and procedures with IYJS to support integrated service planning and design	Protocols and procedures in place
3.2	Work with NEWB, IYJS and other relevant stakeholders to develop overarching policies and procedures agreements to improve the effectiveness and timeliness of service delivery to children at local level	Procedures and agreements in place
3.3	Work with the NEWB, IYJS, OMCYA, HSE and other relevant stakeholders to develop agreements in relation to the exchange of personal information with the consent of the child/parent/guardian or in accordance with a specific statutory provision	Agreements in place and operational
3.4	Actively support participation in Parent/Guardian Consultative Forum for the sector	Participation in Parent/Guardian Consultative Forum
3.5	Build and develop relevant partnerships through European Union programmes and other international programmes	Areas of common action identified and agreed Scope for EU funding explored

Goal 4: Provide training and facilitate planning to support the teaching and learning environment

Co. Dublin VEC, with the support of the DES, will continue to make available training and other opportunities for teaching staff, to ensure the provision of an appropriate teaching and learning environment in children detention schools.

Strategies/Actions		Outputs
4.1	Promote and support creative and innovative teaching and learning approaches in the classroom	Provide CPD and support linked to existing DES support services
4.2	Provide training in special needs education to all teaching staff in detention settings	Access to appropriate training provided
4.3	Facilitate regular planning and training meetings for Co. Dublin VEC senior managers involved in detention settings	Regular meetings established
4.4	Provide for ICT teaching technology in detention settings	Adequate ICT infrastructure in place
4.5	Promote safe teaching and learning environments	Compliance with current health, safety, welfare and child protection regulations