

## Stay@School

### Workshop on Module 5 “External support and cooperation”

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### Minutes

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#### Minutes /

One of the values, very present at our school, is that when we get into the classroom, we behave not as mere transmitters of knowledge in a masterfully way. Apart from offering knowledge, we should raise awareness that we have to get to know the student and we have to be ready to observe and prevent dropout. For us, as teachers, it is a must to detect any risk of abandonment and search internal and external supports which can help us to prevent the risk of dropout and leave school without completing the studies, so we must explore the causes, consequences and seek extra support to deal with the problems.

Among the objectives we have set at our school is that, when we detect any risk of school drop-outs, we follow the steps we consider most important to avoid false alarms. We talk to the student to detect the possible problem that the student might have and which is, somehow, causing a state of anxiety at school and which can jeopardize the students' learning and social inclusion which leads to leaving school and which can influence over **external factors** such as social, cultural and economic instability. To do so, we follow a series of steps:

- The teacher firstly tries to talk to the student .
- If we detect something worrying, the deputy head is reported, who meets the student and tries to talk and establish a communication which will help to identify the possible cause of the problem, always following the guidelines set by the tutor.



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- At that meeting, if it is considered that might be a really 'annoying' problem, the director, together with the tutor's student, work to find the best solution.
- Sometimes, when the student is unmotivated to learn because he/she feels lost compared to the rest of the class, there is an **alternative curriculum** adapted to the students' needs so that he/she can feel more useful and secure in the classroom.
- Most of the times, the student keeps in touch with a member at the **guidance department** who guides us of the steps to follow.
- The tutor also meets the parents and the student to explain the problem, and agree to work together in order to motivate the student and prevent the abandonment.
- When we follow these steps, but the student does not react and drops school day after day, we look for external help, most of the times in **youth leaders/tutors**, which are provided by the local council.
- If the student still remains without attending the classes, we have to report to the City Council. Then, the **social services** is responsible for the follow-up and makes the student attend school (alarm clock service, pick the student up at home and take him/her to school, etc)

Another issue is **bullying**. Fortunately, in our Center bullying is not a worrying problem. We always try to listen to complaints and problems of concern to students, often caused by pressure and excess of external information. Teenagers are very sensitive to criticism and comments from colleagues and tend to magnify what it is just a joke. We try to make them understand. Of course, we never keep aside the huge problem which can be bullying.

A different topic is **mobile phones usage** and the great skills and knowledge that students have about **social networks**, which sometimes bring more than an annoyance to students and teachers. In this case, teachers and parents work together since at this age they don't understand the concept of joke. This is one of the points that is widely discussed in tutoring sessions.

Make the student, who uses social networks in an inappropriate way, feel the situation of the student who is the subject of joke, works pretty well. The video we have seen about text messages reflects the situation of how students feel ; in our Center we have solved these confrontations most of the times, by letting



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communication flow with the tutor and mostly working in values and enforcing students' self-esteem.

Many times **discouragement** is not under our possibilities, because nowadays, as both parents work, and do not match the schedules, the student, when parents leave to work, he / she prefers to stay in bed, so he /she is always late. In this way, the student starts losing interest in the learning process and there are more and more gaps . In these cases, the level of success is very low. We have also observed this fact in dysfunctional / broken families, where parents do not join any criteria regarding to their children's education.

In our school, the social-educational family level is medium - high, this fact reduces the risk of dropping out because our students usually find the help they need in their parents or elder siblings. For **the most disadvantaged**, through support classes or what is called *PAE* (special support programme), we try to compensate as far as possible that deficiency of educational factors which are at home. Many times parents have been forced to work since childhood, so that their level of knowledge is not suitable or enough to help their children to perform their studies or homework. At our school, those parents who ask for help and guidance always have our cooperation and support.

It is also usual the level of **social exclusion among groups**, which is often given among high school students as they are very jealous of 'other friends' and that leads them to exclude peers, sometimes to please the group. In this case, the direct observation by teachers in breaks and class changes is essential to detect and prevent this type of social exclusion.

At our school, we have the advantage that we are an inclusive school for children with motor problems, so our students have been used to working and participating in activities with them since an early age. Therefore, the risk of exclusion of students is minimised. In this sense, the aim of all the teachers together with the management team is **work on the inclusion of everything and everyone** without exception and quickly act together in case of detecting any anomaly to avoid things get worse and always according to the following established points.

- Explore the level of risk in individual students.
- Highlight and set up suitable reinforcements, facing the risk of dropout.
- Diagram of cooperative flows and external supports, where cooperation is the most effective tool to reduce dropout rates.



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