

AFTER SCHOOL ROLE IN THE EDUCATION ECOSYSTEM

Guidelines for Building and Managing Relationships

April 2021

Useful Links

- General resources on COVID-19 can be found here: <https://sacoronavirus.co.za/>.
- Safety and COVID-19-related protocol: <https://thelearningtrust.org/resources/>.
- Roles and responsibilities of School Governing Bodies: [South Africa Schools Act.pdf](#)
- [Department of Basic Education \(DBE\) National Senior Certificate Examination Report 2020](#)
- [DBE's Atlas of Education Districts in South Africa](#)
- Moya App – a Data-free Mobile Messenger: <https://moya.app>

The Department of Basic Education's (DBE) *National Senior Certificate Examination Report 2020* highlights the key role that additional learner support has played in producing quality learning outcomes despite the odds. After-school's contribution during the pandemic has been through supplying physical learning materials, curating online content and support, and extending psychosocial services.

The Education Ecosystem



The role of extended learning programmes is a critical one for those learners in quintile 1 – 3 schools who are less exposed to enrichment activities at school. In 2021 and going forward, after-school intends to work more closely with schools, with other civil society organisations, and with parents/caregivers – creating an education *ecosystem* that will tackle learning recovery.

As such, the following document sets out guidelines for consideration by After School Programmes (ASPs) in strengthening their stakeholder relationships. It is hoped and expected that with a more deliberate effort towards cooperation between practitioners, school personnel, and parents, we can recover more swiftly from the learning losses caused by covid-19 school closures.

Communicating with Schools

- Make a list of the district and circuit officials, school leaders, and School Governing Body (SGB) members in your geographical location. Start to develop relationships of trust and understand the specific challenges involved in sustaining them.
- Research and learn about the school's staff members – their focus, interests and priorities – and understand the team roles and structure.
- Respect school and department protocols and adhere to established lines of communication and rules of engagement

Principal > Deputy Principal > SMT/HODs > Teachers and administrative staff

- Find out which other organisations are running programmes at the school. Make contact and understand their programme offering to avoid duplication and learner overload.
- Consider joining or establishing a community forum of youth programmes and schools to share ideas and leverage resources.
- Be specific about your value-add. Emphasise how you can help **increase learning time**, provide access to a **safe and conducive learning space**, share resources to **support learner well-being**, and act as a **bridge between the school and home**.
- Make time and arrangements to meet with the SMT and SGB to communicate your intentions and your progress and impact.
- Communicate regularly with teachers – don't assume that they know or understand your work and role. This can be done through presentations to teachers, handouts/flyers, brief drop-in discussions, and involving the school in learner recruitment for your ASP.
- Identify a key liaison or teacher champion to work with you on recruitment, planning, support and ongoing coordination.
- Share regular progress reports highlighting increased learner attendance, academic progress, decreased drop-out rates, improved grade progression, better subject passes, matric bachelor passes, etc.
- Work towards a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the school or local/provincial department office to clarify expectations.
- Include the school personnel and learners in your events; for example, as speakers at orientation and award sessions, career days and other opportunities.

Supporting Curriculum & Learning Recovery

- Share your covid-19 learning programme and recovery plans with your partner school and invite teachers to explore with you, ways in which your ASP can support them and learners.
- Understand the specific needs of your partner school. Offer innovative and relevant support for learners, such as career guidance, online tutoring, counselling and nutrition support.
- Address key foundational areas of learning, particularly numeracy and literacy basics, challenging subject topics or skills in gateway subjects – this will help fill learning gaps and aid curriculum coverage.
- Work with teachers to identify learners who are struggling academically and help them to identify early warning signs of drop-out, and then link these learners to your support programmes.
- Strategically engage and utilise the Education Assistants (EAs) or Learner Support Agents (LSAs) at each school as additional resources.
- Consider a blended learning approach to overcome reduced contact time. Use smartphone messenger applications (i.e. WhatsApp, Telegram, Moya and Ayoba) for individual and group engagements, and consider using weekend mornings for additional physical contact time.

Managing Parent/Caregiver Relationships

- Join forces with the school as a united front to reach out to parents – they are more likely to attend meetings that are arranged by the school.
- Establish parent messenger groups to maintain regular communications and support @home learning. Seek parental support for your ASP *and* the school.
- Find ways to understand and meet parent/caregiver needs and challenges. Extend your services to them too, and supply them with resources to support @home learning. Also consider home visits where necessary to understand family context and background.
- Provide support resources such as @home learning packs, stimulating play materials, parenting workshops, family literacy and numeracy days, etc.
- Involve parents/caregivers in your regular programming and special events. Help them take ownership of their role in education, and involve them in creating solutions to their child’s learning gaps.

Programme Resources

Real-time online support:

- OLICO Maths hotline (grade 7-9) – WhatsApp “Hi” to [073 923 9021](tel:0739239021)
- DBE’s Teacher Connect WhatsApp line with live support agents [060 060 3333](tel:0600603333)
- learn.olico.org is a zero-rated site with engaging activities
- [Foondamate WhatsApp](#) line for past exam papers, maths support and a dictionary
- [EduBot on Telegram](#) to track progress and access learning materials

At-home learning:

- [Treasure Box Activity Pack](#) is a whole child development after-school resource.
- [WordWorks TIME](#) activities cater for early literacy at grade R-1.
- [Reading Eggs](#) is targeted at grade 1-7.
- [Nal’ibali](#) offers multi-lingual supplements for primary school learners.
- [KM Academics](#) publishes books for Accounting grade 8-9 support
- [Gradesmatch](#) for grade 9-12 career guidance and post-school information.

Feel free to reach out to us at info@thelearningtrust.org for additional information or to share ways in which your ASP is successfully partnering with schools in your area. Let’s learn and work together!