

# Learning Protection and Reconnection in Primary School Practice: Presentation of the Silent Study Hall Programme

Éva Karl<sup>1\*</sup>, György Molnár<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1\*</sup> Széchenyi István University, Doctoral School of Multidisciplinary Engineering Sciences, 1. Egyetem Square, H-9026 Győr, Hungary, [karl.eva@varkerti.hu](mailto:karl.eva@varkerti.hu)

<sup>2</sup> Kandó Kálmán Faculty of Electrical Engineering (KVK TMPK), Óbuda University, 1084 Budapest, Hungary, Széchenyi István University, 1. Egyetem Square, H-9026 Győr, Hungary, [molnar.gyorgy@uni-obuda.hu](mailto:molnar.gyorgy@uni-obuda.hu)

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## Abstract

*Protecting the classroom learning environment is one of the fundamental pedagogical challenges of everyday school practice, especially in mainstream primary schools with increasingly heterogeneous student populations. This study presents the "Silent Study Hall" programme, developed at Vásárhelyi András Primary School, Hungary, as an exemplary practice. The programme aims to ensure that students who are temporarily unable to cooperate effectively do not fall out of the learning process, while also protecting the class community's right to learn and the teacher's instructional flow. The study's theoretical framework draws on learning protection, Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports (PBIS), restorative pedagogical thinking, and sensory regulation. The model presented in the study conceptualises temporary removal from the classroom not as a disciplinary or exclusionary procedure, but as a learning organisation intervention, consciously diverging from the logic of Arizona-type models. Its basic principle is that learning does not stop: the student continues working in a quiet, supervised space and then reconnects with the class community. The study presents the programme's two-level model of use, its three-level protocol, and three-level escalation logic, as well as the experiences of the 2024/2025 pilot phase and the 2025/2026 institutional implementation. The implementation experiences suggest that the programme can be interpreted not only as a reactive intervention, but also as a proactive, learning-supportive space.*

*Keywords: learning environment; learning protection; Csendes Tanulószoba; Silent Study Hall; student responsibility; reconnection; school good practice*

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## 1. Introduction

Over the past decade, the Hungarian public education system has faced increasingly strong expectations: students with special educational needs (SEN) and atypical developmental profiles are appearing in mainstream primary schools in growing numbers, in line with European trends toward integrated education (European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2003; Papp, 2004). Expert opinions from pedagogical support services point to integrated education, while the material, staffing, and methodological conditions in inclusive institutions often fail to keep pace with this process. Issues of equity in Hungarian public education have also become increasingly prominent in legal and policy discourse, particularly regarding equal opportunities, institutional conditions, and the practical enforcement of students' rights (Dombrovsky, 2024). The implementation of the principle of inclusion is, in

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itself, a commendable pedagogical and social goal; however, in everyday school reality, it also generates tensions (Norwich, 2008): in heterogeneous class communities, maintaining an effective classroom learning environment is becoming an increasingly complex task.

The increasingly diverse composition of the pupil population, including children with attention difficulties, emotional regulation problems, anxiety, or behavioural challenges, created situations to which traditional classroom-based pedagogical tools did not always provide an adequate response. The issue was not primarily the behaviour of individual pupils, but rather the growing difficulty of protecting the conditions necessary for classroom learning, including attention, rhythm, and the emotional climate.

In searching for a solution, the initial idea for the programme was inspired by the practice of sensory and quiet rooms already used in several segregated educational institutions, particularly in schools providing special education services. These spaces offer calm, a low-stimulus environment, and regulated conditions during sensory overload. The core question was this: what would happen if a space based on a similar approach were introduced into a mainstream school setting as well, to support a learning organisation rather than provide therapy?

The concept of the "Silent Study Hall" programme emerged from this question. It was launched on a pilot basis at the institution during the 2024/2025 school year, and the initial experiences soon showed that the programme offered broader pedagogical potential than originally expected. It not only addresses disruptive situations but also provides a useful space for students who are tired, overburdened, or who wish to study independently. From the 2025/2026 school year onwards, the programme was introduced at the institutional level, supported by parental information and written declarations.

The basic idea of the programme is simple. If a pupil is temporarily unable to participate in classroom work under the conditions of collective learning during a particular lesson, they do not fall out of the learning process. Instead, they continue working in a quiet, supervised space, while the class community can proceed without disruption. The programme's motto is "learning does not stop."

The present study introduces this good practice within an educational science framework. Its aim is, first, to describe the pedagogical concept and operational model of the programme; second, to summarise the initial experiences of its implementation; and third, to examine the conditions under which other institutions may adapt the model. A learning-protection approach, positive behaviour support, and restorative pedagogical thinking provide the study's theoretical

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framework. The programme presented here consciously differs from the logic of Arizona-type models, both in its emphasis and in its pedagogical message; this distinction is discussed separately in the study.

The study should not be understood as a controlled impact assessment, but rather as a presentation of an institutional good practice. Accordingly, its purpose is to provide a systematic account of the programme's pedagogical rationale, operational procedures, and initial experiences, and to develop an interpretive framework that may serve as a basis for future empirical research.

## **2. Theoretical Background: Learning Protection, Responsibility, and Reintegration**

Interpreting the Silent Study Hall programme requires a theoretical framework that can address, at the same time, the right to learning, community functioning, pupil responsibility, and pedagogical support. Responses to classroom disruptions are not merely technical or organisational solutions. A system that interprets the problem primarily as a breach of rules conveys one pedagogical message, while a system that takes the interruption of the learning process as its starting point points towards a different pedagogical direction.

### *2.1. The Learning-Protection Approach*

The Silent Study Hall programme is based on the recognition that a lesson is not only a space for individual learning, but also a shared working situation. Within this shared space, each participant's behaviour affects the opportunities available to others. A student's right to learn cannot be interpreted in isolation, since the classroom functions as a communal space. The teacher's opportunity to teach, the class's learning rhythm, and each child's individual needs are in constant interaction with one another. This duality is also reinforced at the institutional level by the logic of the Hungarian Public Education Act, which articulates both students' rights and obligations: the right to learn is coupled with responsibility for the functioning of the community (Act CXC of 2011).

The learning-protection approach starts from this reciprocity. It should be noted that the concept of learning protection lacks a uniform, canonised definition in the Hungarian educational science literature. In the present study, the authors use it as a working concept, defined as follows: learning protection refers to the school's conscious effort to preserve and ensure the conditions of learning for all those concerned, including the undisturbed functioning of the class community, the teacher's opportunity to teach, and the individual student's responsibility for

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learning. The concept is grounded in an understanding of learning as the learner's active, constructive process, whose conditions can be consciously shaped by the environment (Nahalka, 2002). This approach is related to the multi-tiered logic of PBIS, insofar as it directs attention not solely to individual behaviour, but to the learning environment as a whole.

The learning-protection approach therefore denotes a pedagogical framework rather than a set of disciplinary tools: it expresses the intention that the school should remain committed to the continuity of learning even in difficult situations. Its aim is neither to respond to every disruptive behaviour with an immediate disciplinary measure, nor to leave the persistent obstruction of classroom functioning without consequences by referring to individual difficulties. Learning protection means that the school consciously protects the conditions for learning: attention, time, the teacher's opportunity to teach, the group's working rhythm, and the learning responsibility of the student concerned. From this perspective, order is important because, without it, the quality of learning is impaired. Jacob S. Kounin's classic theory of classroom management can be meaningfully connected to this approach. The significance of Kounin's work lies in his examination of classroom discipline primarily as a matter of organising and sustaining the learning process, rather than as a problem of subsequent discipline. In his approach, effective classroom functioning is based on the teacher's continuous, alert, and comprehensive presence, the preservation of lesson momentum, smooth transitions between activities, and the maintenance of students' active engagement (Kounin, 1970). Subsequent research syntheses on classroom management also confirm the effectiveness of preventive, learning-organisation-oriented approaches (Marzano et al., 2003; Emmer & Gerwels, 2006). In this context, the programme is not a direct application of Kounin's theory. However, it represents a related perspective, since its starting point is likewise that the classroom learning process requires protection. The teacher first attempts to maintain attention, the working rhythm, and the conditions of communal learning through the tools available within the classroom. When these tools are no longer sufficient in a given situation, the Silent Study Hall offers an institutional framework that preserves the class's learning momentum while keeping the student engaged in learning. When drawing on Kounin's work, it is worth noting that his conceptual framework has had a significant impact on the classroom management literature. However, subsequent empirical investigations of specific relationships have not always yielded unequivocal results. Irving and Martin (1982), for example, explicitly re-examined the variable of withitness and were unable to replicate Kounin's finding that comprehensive teacher presence is significantly and positively related to students' engagement

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in work and freedom from disruptive behaviour. This caution does not diminish the theoretical significance of Kounin's work; rather, it suggests that, when interpreting the Silent Study Hall, Kounin's concepts should be used primarily as a pedagogical framework, not as direct evidence of effectiveness.

## *2.2. The Positive Behaviour Support Approach*

Positive behaviour support, that is, Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports (PBIS), represents an important theoretical point of connection. PBIS is not simply a disciplinary method, but a multi-tiered institutional framework based on prevention, clear expectations, data-based decision-making, and the identification of pupils' support needs. According to the Centre on PBIS, classroom PBIS aims to create a predictable, positive, effective, and equitable teaching and learning environment (Center on PBIS, n.d.). This idea is particularly important because the Silent Study Hall, too, should be understood not as an independent punitive tool, but as an element of an institutional learning organisation.

The PBIS approach emphasises that effective school functioning requires clear, well-known, consistently applied, and pedagogically justifiable frameworks. What provides pupils with a sense of security is not the absence of consequences. However, they understand the expectations, see the boundaries, and experience the school as functioning predictably, even in difficult situations. In this sense, consistency does not mean rigidity; rather, it creates the pedagogical security within which pupils know that the rules of collective learning apply to everyone, while the institution does not give up on them even when, in a given situation, they are unable to meet these expectations.

## *2.3. Restorative Pedagogical Thinking*

The learning-protection approach is also closely connected to restorative pedagogical thinking. Restorative practices place the restoration of relationships, communal responsibility, and re-engagement at the centre. According to a summary by the Learning Policy Institute, restorative school practices support community building, the development of interpersonal skills, the repair of harm, and the proactive addressing of students' needs (Darling-Hammond, 2023; International Institute for Restorative Practices, n.d.). The Silent Study Hall programme is not identical to restorative procedures; nevertheless, it reflects a related perspective in that temporary removal is interpreted not as permanent exclusion but as preparation for an orderly return to the community.

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One important lesson of the restorative approach is that it is not sufficient merely to close school conflicts; relationships must also be repaired (Zehr & Chilton, 2024). At the same time, the examination of the effects of such practices requires further methodological refinement (Zakszeski & Rutherford, 2021). Recent reviews drawing on teachers' experiences suggest that the school-based use of restorative practices can be genuinely effective when they are understood not merely as conflict-management techniques but as a relational, community-building pedagogical approach (Moran et al., 2024). Resolving a disruptive classroom situation in itself produces only a short-term result. In the longer term, the key questions are how the student concerned can return to the community, how they will assume responsibility for the missed work, and what support they receive to function differently on the next occasion.

#### *2.4. Connections to the International Literature on Within-School Separation*

The Silent Study Hall shows a functional affinity with institutional practices known in the Anglo-Saxon literature as in-school suspension (ISS). ISS refers to an intervention in which a student temporarily leaves the classroom but remains within the school in a supervised setting, typically to prevent complete disengagement from the learning process. The empirical literature on this topic is substantial, and its findings are also worth considering when interpreting the Silent Study Hall. Research suggests that the effectiveness of ISS depends largely on whether the intervention functions merely as punitive separation or also includes learning-related and supportive elements. Bucher's early analysis pointed out that ISS can meaningfully reduce repeated disciplinary incidents when learning, reflection, and behavioural support components are incorporated into the programme (Bucher & Manning, 2003). Later studies indicate that ISS does not, in itself, improve academic achievement and may carry risks if it disproportionately affects disadvantaged or minority students (Cholewa et al., 2018). From a pedagogical perspective, these findings reinforce what the concept of the Silent Study Hall also emphasises: temporary withdrawal within the school can be supportive when it is filled with learning content and operates as a documented, proportionate process that concludes with re-engagement. For this reason, the Silent Study Hall should not simply be regarded as the Hungarian equivalent of ISS. It represents a narrower pedagogical focus, centred on maintaining the learning process while also sharing a fundamental lesson of the ISS literature: in-school separation is defensible only when it has pedagogical substance and avoids a punitive function.

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## 2.5. *Sensory Regulation as a Starting Point*

The distinctiveness of the Silent Study Hall concept lies partly in the fact that its theoretical roots extend to sensory regulation practices used in special educational institutions. In segregated settings, particularly in special education methodological institutions, low-stimulus, calm rooms have long been used to address sensory overload. Hungarian autism-specific recommendations for public education also emphasise the importance of a structured environment, appropriate indoor spaces, and the reduction of disturbing sensory stimuli, especially for students who respond more sensitively to environmental demands (Autisták Országos Szövetsége, 2024; Ayres, 2005; Heller, 2014). Such spaces embody the recognition that, for certain students, the possibility of neurological calming may be a prerequisite for learning. The Silent Study Hall transfers this perspective into the mainstream school environment to organise learning rather than provide therapy. This transfer represents both a theoretical and a practical innovation: it recognises that a calm, low-stimulus space is not exclusively a need of students with special educational needs, but a general human need that may be relevant to any student in everyday school life. At the same time, it is important to emphasise that the Silent Study Hall is not a sensory therapy room and does not replace professional support in special education, psychology, or development. From the perspective of sensory regulation, it primarily adopts the pedagogical insight that reducing environmental demands may, in certain situations, be a prerequisite for returning to learning activity.

## 2.6. *Summary of the Theoretical Framework*

The theoretical framework of the Silent Study Hall is built from several complementary pedagogical perspectives. The learning-protection approach connects the class community's right to learn, the teacher's space for teaching, and the pupil's responsibility for learning. Kounin's theory of classroom management provides an interpretive framework through the concepts of teacher presence, lesson momentum, and group attention. Positive behaviour support emphasises the importance of predictable institutional functioning; restorative thinking refines the programme through the perspective of reintegration into the community; and the perspective of sensory regulation helps explain the pedagogical role of a calm, low-stimulus learning space.

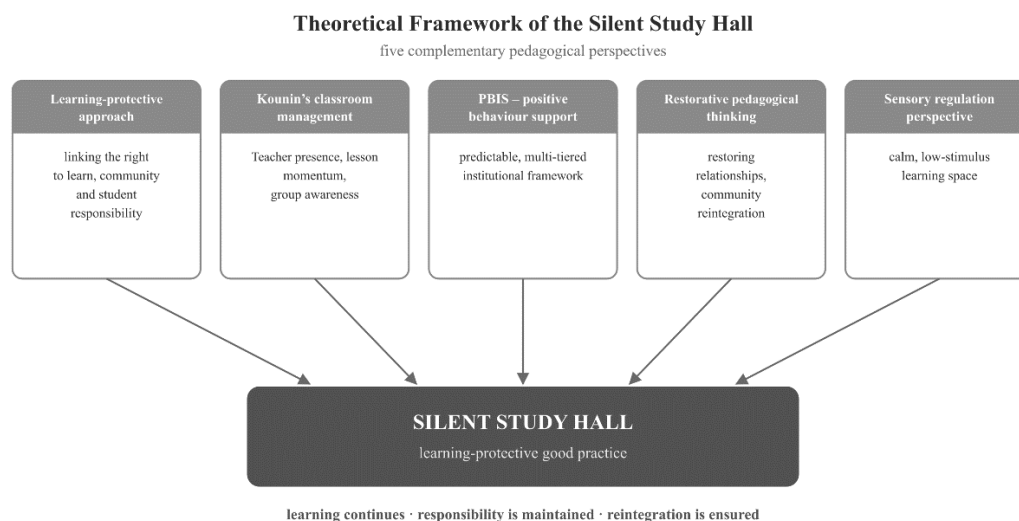


Fig. 1. The theoretical framework of the Silent Study Hall.

Together, these theoretical directions create a pedagogical balance within which the programme can be understood not simply as a disciplinary technique, but as a good practice. Maintaining responsibility ensures that the pupil concerned is not exempted from the learning task. Reintegration prevents temporary removal from becoming an exclusionary or stigmatising measure. Within this theoretical framework, the Silent Study Hall is an institutional response that approaches disruptive classroom situations from the perspective of protecting the learning environment as a whole and seeks to answer how learning can be preserved for all those involved.

### 3. The Concept of the Silent Study Hall and Its Distinction from the Arizona Model

The Silent Study Hall can be understood as an institutional good practice that seeks to ensure, at the same time, the protection of the classroom learning environment, the maintenance of the pupil's learning responsibility, and the possibility of reintegration into the community. The programme starts from the practical experience that handling disruptive situations arising during lessons cannot depend solely on the immediate decision, patience, or the pedagogical repertoire of the individual teacher. There is a need for a procedure that is widely known, pedagogically justifiable, and institutionally supported, providing a predictable framework for the teacher, the pupil, and the class community alike in difficult situations.

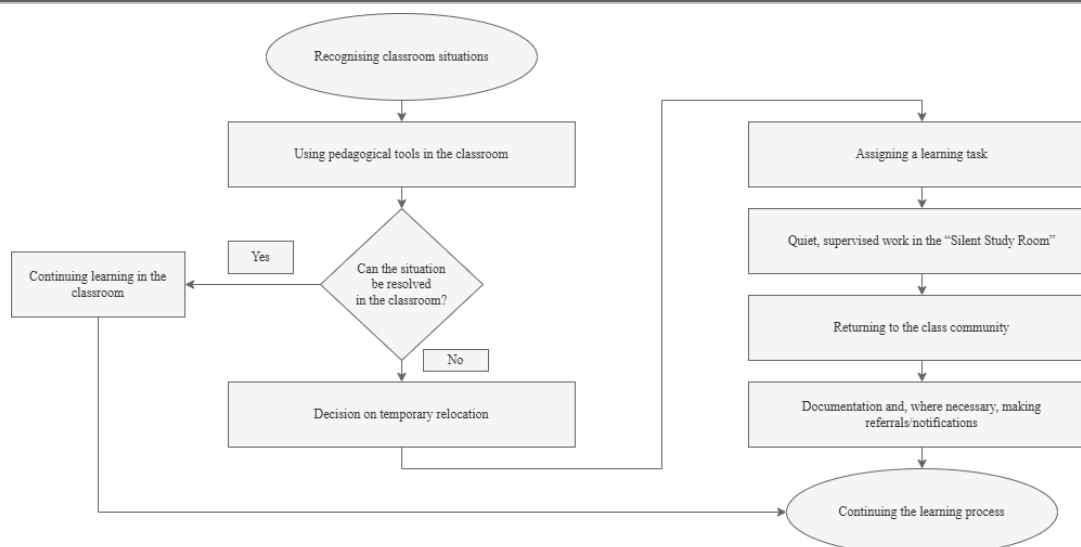


Fig. 2. Conceptual Representation of the Model

The central idea of the programme is simple. If a pupil is temporarily unable to function according to the rules of collective learning during a particular lesson, they do not fall out of the learning process. The pupil is not given time to rest, is not exempted from the lesson task, and is not removed from the school's pedagogical attention. Instead, they continue working in a quiet, supervised learning space, while the class community can proceed without disruption. The programme is therefore based on the logic of keeping the pupil engaged in learning rather than removing them from it.

### 3.1. *The Pedagogical Message of the Name*

The name of the programme carries a deliberate pedagogical message. The adjective "silent" does not refer to passivity, punitive silence, or emotional suppression, but to an environment in which the pupil can work with fewer stimuli and under calmer conditions. The term "study hall" makes it clear that the function of the space is not to judge behaviour, conduct a disciplinary conversation, or remove the pupil from the teacher's responsibility, but to continue the learning task.

This name distinguishes the programme from interpretations associated with a punishment room, a training room, or a rest room. The term "training room" suggests that the pupil is expected to work on their behaviour. By contrast, "study hall" indicates that the child remains engaged in learning. The Silent Study Hall does not communicate to the pupil that their behaviour must now become the separate focus of attention, but rather that the learning task is to be continued within a different framework.

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### 3.2. *The Broader Scope of the Programme*

It is important to emphasise that the Silent Study Hall does not function solely as a reactive intervention. The experiences gained during its implementation have shown that the space also fulfils proactive learning-support functions. For pupils following an individual learning schedule, it has become a natural place of work. Pupils experiencing more tiring or difficult days make voluntary use of it, as the quieter environment supports concentration. Children who are capable of independent learning and seek deeper engagement also turn to it with confidence. This broader use indicates that the need for a calm, low-stimulus learning space is not limited to problematic situations, but reflects a more general human and educational need.

### 3.3. *Distinction from the Arizona Model*

For a professional interpretation of the Silent Study Hall, it is essential to clarify how the concept relates to the Arizona Programme as practised in schools. There are points of contact between the two approaches: both seek an institutional response to disruptive classroom situations, both start from the protection of the right to learn and to teach, and both acknowledge that, in certain situations, temporary withdrawal from the classroom may be necessary in order to protect the classroom learning process. Despite these similarities, the pedagogical emphasis, operational logic, and communicative message of the two systems differ substantially.

The international antecedent of the Arizona Programme is Edward E. Ford's model, known as the Responsible Thinking Process, which places student responsibility, recognition of the consequences of decisions, and respect for others' rights at the centre (Ford, 1997). Hungarian Arizona programmes are generally organised around three basic principles: every student has the right to undisturbed learning, every teacher has the right to undisturbed teaching, and everyone must respect the rights of others. One of the most important features of the Arizona Programme is that it places the student in a decision-making situation: the teacher indicates the rule violation, after which the student must decide whether they can remain in the classroom while observing the shared rules, or whether they will leave the classroom and reflect on their behaviour in the training room. The Silent Study Hall does not begin from this logic. It does not place the student's decision-making situation at the centre, and behavioural reflection is not its primary aim. The programme's starting point is the protection of the learning process. The institution makes it clear to the student concerned that their obligation to learn remains in force; they are merely required to fulfil it temporarily in a different learning space. The Silent Study

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Hall therefore functions not as an option to choose from, but as a consequence of the organisation of learning.

This difference is not merely technical but also significant in terms of educational approach. In the Arizona Programme, strong emphasis is placed on the student's decision: whether to remain and cooperate or to leave the classroom. In the Silent Study Hall, the emphasis falls on the continuity of the learning task. For the child, the main question is not whether they leave or stay, but where and in what form they continue learning. The difference between the two approaches is also reflected in the designated space's function. In the Arizona Programme, the training room is primarily a space for thinking through behaviour, becoming aware of rule violations, and preparing to take responsibility, during which the student often completes a reflective task. By contrast, the Silent Study Hall is primarily a learning space. The student is not placed there to take part in extended behavioural analysis, but to continue learning work under quiet, supervised conditions.

It is important to emphasise that the pedagogical value of Arizona-type models cannot be called into question in general. Approaches aimed at developing responsible thinking, including Ford's original model, are built on serious theoretical foundations and have been applied with positive experiences in many schools (Ford, 1997). Developing students' decision-making responsibility and self-reflection is a genuine pedagogical aim, the relevance of which the Silent Study Hall does not dispute. The difference is not a matter of value judgement but of emphasis: the Silent Study Hall prioritises the maintenance of the learning process over behavioural reflection.

If Arizona-type programmes are implemented inconsistently or lack a sufficiently learning-centred focus, there is a risk that the training room may become an opportunity to avoid classroom work. If the student experiences leaving the classroom as a way to avoid a task that is difficult or unpleasant for them, the system may unintentionally reinforce avoidance behaviour. The Silent Study Hall reduces this risk by keeping the learning task at the centre. The student is not exempted from work: what they did not complete during the lesson must be addressed in the quiet space and, if necessary, through further make-up work. The student is also required to account for all of this.

There is also a significant difference in communication. In the Arizona Programme, terms such as "being sent out", "training room", or "rule violation" often appear. These expressions are understandable within the programme's logic, but they may easily evoke a disciplinary or punitive framework. The Silent Study Hall consciously uses different language: it describes its

own operation through the concepts of learning space, supervised work, redirection, and make-up work. This language is less stigmatising and fits more closely with the communication of an inclusive yet consistent school, while emphasising the pedagogical goal to be achieved. A different emphasis also becomes possible in communication with parents. In the case of the Arizona Programme, the parent may easily hear that their child broke a rule and was therefore sent to the training room. In the case of the Silent Study Hall, the information can be formulated in the language of learning: during the given lesson, the child was unable to work together with the class community, and therefore continued the work in a supervised, quiet learning space, while any missed learning material must be made up. This approach does not blur responsibility, yet it is less confrontational and is more likely to open the way for cooperation with the family.

Table 1. Comparison of the Arizona-type Model and the Silent Study Hall approach

Aspect	Arizona-type Model	Silent Study Hall
Central focus	Behavioural decision-making and reflection	Maintenance of the learning process
Function of the designated space	Reflection on behaviour	Quiet, supervised learning
Student role	Student placed in a decision-making situation	Student continuing their learning task
Risk	May function as an opportunity to exit classroom work	May become separation if no task is assigned
Return	Reconnection to the rules	Learning-related and community reintegration

The difference between the two programmes, therefore, cannot be understood as one being strict and the other permissive. Both seek to protect classroom learning, but they do so through different routes. The Arizona Programme foregrounds behavioural decision-making and reflection. The Silent Study Hall prioritises maintaining the learning process, completing tasks, making up missed work, and reintegration. For this reason, the programme is not simply a local version of Arizona, but a learning-protection good practice that draws on its experiences while choosing a different emphasis.

#### 4. The Operational Model of the Good Practice

The Silent Study Hall can become a genuine institutional good practice only if its operation is not incidental, dependent on individual staff members, or driven by momentary emotions. The essence of the programme is precisely to offer a previously known, pedagogically justifiable, and transparent process for all those involved in handling disruptive classroom situations. The operational model is therefore not merely a technical procedure but the practical realisation of the programme's underlying approach: the protection of learning, the maintenance of pupil responsibility, and the support of reintegration are all present within it simultaneously.

### 4.1. The Two Types of Use

The experiences gained during the programme's implementation have shown that the Silent Study Hall can be used in two ways and that their pedagogical handling differs substantially. In the case of voluntary use, the pupil enters the space on their own decision and with the teacher's approval: they may be tired, be experiencing a more difficult day, wish to study independently in greater depth, or their individual learning schedule may justify its use. In other cases, the teacher directs the pupil to the Silent Study Hall because their behaviour is persistently hindering the learning of the class community. Different consequences and reporting obligations are attached to the two types of use, as summarised in the table below.

Table 2. Parental and external notification procedures by type of Silent Study Hall use

Type of use	Parental notification	External notification
Voluntary learning	No	No
One-off transfer	Occasional	No
Recurrent problem	Yes	No
Recurrent problem and lack of parental cooperation	Yes	Yes

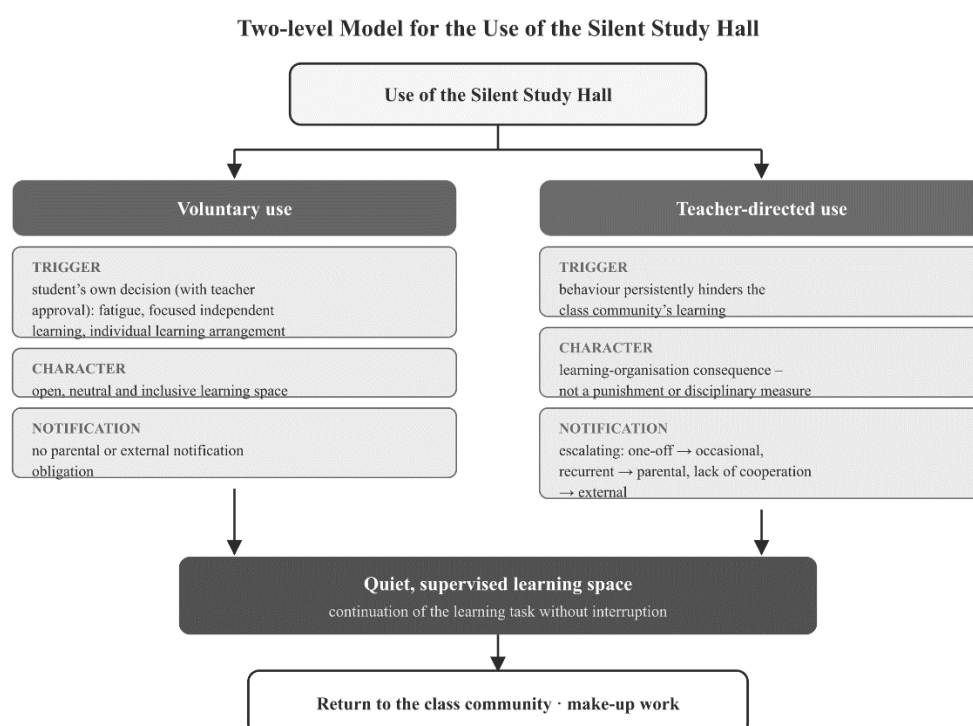


Fig. 3. The two-level model of use of the Silent Study Hall

"Occasional" parental notification means that, in the case of a single transfer, information is provided based on the professional judgement of the teacher or the class teacher. This may be justified, for example, if the event is unusual compared with the pupil's previous functioning, if

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a significant part of the lesson work was missed, or if the situation requires parental support for the sake of later cooperation.

This distinction is pedagogically crucial. If a reporting obligation were also associated with voluntary use, the space would lose its neutral and inclusive character, and pupils would be discouraged from using it voluntarily. By applying the logic of notification only to problematic cases, the Silent Study Hall can genuinely function as an open and safe space for all pupils. The first step of the model is always the pedagogical handling of the classroom situation. The Silent Study Hall must not become the first response to minor disruption, inattention, or more difficult behaviour arising from age-related characteristics. The teacher's primary space remains the classroom, and their primary set of tools remains classroom-based pedagogical work. This includes eye contact, a brief and quiet signal, redirecting the pupil back to the task, modifying the seating arrangement or work organisation, differentiated task-setting, positive reinforcement, and the personal pedagogical presence, which, in many cases, is sufficient in itself to restore the situation. In the language of Kounin's theory of classroom management, this process can also be understood as maintaining comprehensive teacher presence, lesson momentum, and smooth learning organisation. In such situations, the teacher is not merely responding to individual instances of disruptive behaviour but is attempting to keep the whole learning situation in balance: attention is directed towards the task, the group's work rhythm, and the possibility of redirecting the pupil concerned is managed simultaneously (Kounin, 1970).

The use of the Silent Study Hall is justified when these tools do not yield immediate results, and the pupil's behaviour persistently hinders collective learning. The principle of proportionality is particularly important because it protects the programme from becoming a routine practice of sending pupils out of the classroom.

#### *4.2. Interpreting "Persistent Hindrance"*

A key concept in the programme's operation is the persistent hindrance to classroom work, since this is the situation in which directing a pupil to the Silent Study Hall is justified. At the same time, the precise operationalisation of this concept is difficult from a pedagogical perspective. Classroom situations are so varied that they cannot be linked exclusively to duration or the number of warnings given. The same behaviour may have different effects in different contexts: an interjection may be humorous and reduce tension in one situation. At the same time, in another, it may substantially hinder the course of the lesson. The teacher's decision, therefore,

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necessarily requires professional judgement. During the implementation period, the institution did not develop formalised, quantified threshold values, but rather a shared professional interpretation. In staff discussions, the following types of situations were identified as clear reasons for directing a pupil to the Silent Study Hall: continuous interjections that persistently disrupt the course of the lesson; repeated provocation of peers or the deliberate diversion of their attention; refusal to complete the task when accompanied by the disturbance of other pupils; and loud, disruptive manifestations that resist the teacher's attempts at redirection. At the same time, minor manifestations such as a single interjection, inattention or daydreaming, and quiet, occasional conversation with a neighbour do not justify transfer to the Silent Study Hall. In such cases, the teacher's classroom-based pedagogical repertoire remains an appropriate response.

#### *4.3. Communication of the Transfer*

The communication of the transfer is brief and factual. The teacher does not initiate a public debate, does not label the pupil, and does not dramatise the situation. The pupil is informed in a clear and calm sentence that they must continue their learning work in the Silent Study Hall. Such a sentence might be: "You will now continue your work in the Silent Study Hall. Learning does not stop; you will carry on with your task there." This communication is both firm and factual. It maintains the pupil's responsibility for learning while avoiding humiliation.

From the perspective of the class community, it is equally important that the transfer does not become a conspicuous event. The process should take place briefly, calmly, and predictably, so that the lesson can return to its own learning rhythm as quickly as possible.

#### *4.4. The Continuity of the Learning Task*

A learning task must be attached to the transfer in every case. This is one of the most important professional elements of the programme. The pupil does not simply "leave" the lesson, but takes a task with them, or receives work in the Silent Study Hall that is aligned with the content of the given lesson. Ideally, the task is directly connected to the current lesson: a textbook or workbook section, written practice, text processing, note-taking, or independent problem-solving. If the task from the lesson cannot be transferred in its original form, the institution ensures the learning character of the process through a previously developed repository of tasks and practice exercises.

The purpose of assigning a task is not to place an additional burden on the pupil. Rather, the aim is to ensure that the pupil continues to experience, without interruption, that they are in

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school learning time, that their role as a learner remains in place, and that they are not exempted from classroom work.

#### *4.5. The Role of the Supervisor*

In the Silent Study Hall, the supervising adult's role is clearly defined. The supervisor may be a teacher, a pedagogical assistant, a special education assistant, or a special education teacher, depending on the institution's possibilities and organisational arrangements. Their task is not to reopen the classroom conflict, hold the pupil accountable, or judge the pupil. Their primary responsibility is to provide a calm, safe environment suitable for work. They may help the pupil understand the task, remind them of the framework, and monitor whether the pupil is engaging with the assigned work. This role is supportive and framework-maintaining rather than punitive.

The calm presence of the supervising adult helps prevent escalation in the classroom. The pupil concerned is removed from the setting in which attention, resistance, or peers' reactions may previously have sustained the problem. In the Silent Study Hall, there are fewer stimuli, and the task is clearer.

#### *4.6. Return and Make-Up Work*

Return is a key point of the programme. The Silent Study Hall is essentially a short-term intervention, typically lasting until the end of the lesson. At the end of the lesson, the pupil may return to their class or to the next learning situation. The return should, as far as possible, be natural, brief, and free of tension. Later, in a calmer situation, the teacher may speak with the pupil about how the missed work can be made up and what may support cooperation in the next lesson.

Academic make-up work is an integral part of the return. It must be made clear to the pupil that temporary removal from the classroom does not cancel the requirements of the given lesson. Whatever the pupil was unable to complete during the lesson must be made up in an appropriate form. This may take place through presenting the task started in the Silent Study Hall, completing work at home, giving an account in the next lesson, or in another way determined by the teacher. Make-up work is not retaliation, but the restoration of learning responsibility.

#### *4.7. The Three-Level Protocol*

The programme follows a gradual escalation logic, consisting of three clearly distinguishable levels.

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At the first level, the given classroom situation is addressed quickly and proportionately. The pupil completes their task in the Silent Study Hall and then returns to the class community. In itself, this is a closed case and does not require parental notification if it is a one-off event.

The second level comes into operation when the transfer becomes recurrent. In such cases, the class teacher contacts the parents, and they jointly explore the underlying causes. The aim is not to assign blame, but to understand why difficulties with classroom cooperation recur and what shared steps may help the child.

The third level becomes necessary if parental cooperation is not established and the difficulty persists. In this case, the institution also seeks external support to identify and address the problem's causes. This step is not punitive in intent, but means activating a broader support system available to the child and the family.

#### *4.8. Documentation*

Every referral to the Silent Study Hall must be briefly recorded. The documentation may include the student's name, the time of the referral, the lesson in question, the name of the referring teacher, the brief reason for the transfer, the assigned task, the student's cooperation observed in the Silent Study Hall, and any further actions required. The purpose of documentation is to ensure transparency in the process and to identify recurring patterns, rather than to create a "file" on the student.

Recording cases is particularly important for recognising repeated patterns. If a student is frequently referred to the Silent Study Hall, the situation can no longer be regarded merely as an isolated problem of individual lessons. The class teacher, the teachers concerned, and, where necessary, support professionals must interpret the situation together. The following questions need to be raised: whether the difficulty appears in relation to particular subjects, whether it is connected to the time of day, fatigue, social conflict, or learning difficulties, and whether developmental, special educational, or child protection support is required. At present, documentation is paper-based, which makes the process quick, simple, and applicable across institutions. At Vásárhelyi András Primary School, the next planned step is the digitalisation of the documentation system and its integration with the WTCAi pedagogical assessment system (Karl, Nagy & Molnár, 2024; Karl, Nagy, Molnár & Szűts, 2024). This would make it possible to automatically identify recurring patterns, compare them with students' background data, and conduct institution-level analysis. Hungarian experience suggests that the digitalisation of institutional processes is effective when implemented as a tool that serves pedagogical aims,

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rather than as a self-serving technological development (Balogh et al., 2020; Molnár, 2022). The planned development direction connected to WTCAi aligns particularly well with the operation of the Silent Study Hall because the data generated by the programme can be interpreted primarily as pedagogical signals rather than disciplinary indicators. With the help of digital recording, the emphasis would shift from the isolated registration of individual cases to the exploration of learning-related, behavioural, temporal, or subject-specific patterns within institutional practice.

#### *4.9. The Physical Space*

The Silent Study Hall does not need to be a special or costly room. What matters more is that it should be calm, orderly, transparent, and suitable for work. It should include a desk, a chair, basic learning materials, worksheets, and brief rules that clearly define the space's function. The message of the room should be clear: this is a place where pupils work quietly, address missed learning tasks, and then return to the community. The space must not be cold or punitive in character, as this would weaken its supportive function; at the same time, it should not become a comfortable rest area, as that would undermine its learning-protection role.

#### *4.10. The Delimitation of Roles*

The operational model also requires precise role delineation. The subject teacher is responsible for recognising the classroom situation, making a proportionate decision, and assigning the learning task. The supervisor of the Silent Study Hall ensures a calm working environment and maintains the framework for task completion. The class teacher monitors recurrent cases, maintains contact with parents, and may initiate further consultations. The school leadership supports the system's operating conditions, its regulation, and a shared pedagogical interpretation. Support professionals become involved when the documented cases indicate deeper learning, behavioural, emotional, or social difficulties.

#### *4.11. Contraindications and Legal Framework*

In order to clarify the professional boundaries of the programme, it is also necessary to identify the situations in which the use of the Silent Study Hall is not justified or is expressly contraindicated. The programme must not be used in cases of acute psychological crisis, suicidal indication, disorientation, or severe anxiety attack. In such cases, the student concerned does not need to continue the learning task but requires immediate support from a psychologist, child protection professional, or healthcare specialist, and the institution's relevant protocol must be activated. Similarly, the use of the Silent Study Hall is not justified when there is a

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suspicion that the student's behaviour may be linked to abuse, a crisis at home, or another background factor requiring a child protection referral. In such cases, instead of using the learning space, the appropriate professional channels must be activated immediately. It is an important pedagogical responsibility for the teacher to recognise when a situation moves beyond the field of learning organisation and enters the domain of crisis intervention or child protection. From a legal interpretation of the programme, it is important to establish that the Silent Study Hall does not constitute a disciplinary measure. Section 58(3) of Act CXC of 2011 on National Public Education sets out disciplinary measures in detail, and these require a formal procedure, a written decision, and the possibility of legal remedy. By contrast, the Silent Study Hall is a learning-organisation intervention: to protect the learning environment, the teacher temporarily continues the student's work in a different learning space without applying a formal sanction. This distinction is essential because, in this way, the programme does not conflict with disciplinary regulations, while its inclusion in the school rules and institutional regulations remains necessary. The system of parental information and documentation ensures transparency, which serves as a guarantee for the enforcement of students' rights.

## **5. Implementation Experiences at Vásárhelyi András Primary School**

The implementation experiences presented in this study are based on four data sources. The first source consists of the paper-based documentation sheets for the Silent Study Hall, 52 of which were completed during the period under review. These recorded the reason for the transfer, the assigned task, and the quality of the student's cooperation. The second source comprises materials from structured conversations with students that explored the reasons for referral to the Silent Study Hall from the students' own perspectives. The third source is provided by feedback from the institution's 16-member teaching staff, including 6 lower-primary teachers, 7 subject teachers, 1 special education teacher, 1 special education assistant, and 1 teaching assistant. These reflections were collected through staff meetings and informal professional consultations. The fourth source is the system of class-teacher notifications: every transfer to the Silent Study Hall was reported to the relevant class teacher, who then decided, based on their own pedagogical judgement, what further steps were necessary, including informing parents or other forms of intervention.

During the processing of the documentation sheets, cases were categorised according to the reason for transfer, the subject and time of day concerned, the type of use, whether voluntary or initiated by a teacher, recurrence, and the quality of student cooperation. The head of the institution conducted the review for the examined periods of the 2024/2025 and 2025/2026

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school years. Of the 52 documented cases, 14 involved voluntary use and 38 were teacher-initiated transfers; recurrence occurred in 8 students. Student conversations took place in every case, following pre-defined thematic areas: the student's interpretation of the reason for the transfer, their experience in the Silent Study Hall, and their experience of returning to the classroom. Written notes were taken during these conversations, which the teachers interpreted alongside the documentation sheets. Staff feedback was drawn from the minutes of monthly meetings and from the leadership summaries of informal professional consultations; these materials were processed through thematic organisation.

The study should be interpreted as a description of good practice rather than as an impact assessment with a control group; therefore, the experiences presented are primarily exploratory and interpretive. Both data collection and interpretation were conducted by the head of the institution, who is also the programme's developer and the first author of the present study. This threefold role does not invalidate the observations, but, from a methodological perspective, it entails a risk of bias, which the study seeks to address through factual wording and restraint in drawing causal conclusions. A more precise measurement of the programme's effects would require further longitudinal research involving multiple institutions.

The Silent Study Hall programme was launched on a pilot basis at Vásárhelyi András Primary School during the 2024/2025 school year. Based on the initial experiences, the programme showed broader pedagogical potential than originally expected and was therefore introduced at the institutional level from the 2025/2026 school year onwards. Its introduction was preceded by careful preparation: parents were informed about the programme's purpose, operation, and pedagogical approach, and then signed a written declaration acknowledging the programme's presence in the institution. This step was important not only from legal and ethical perspectives, but also for establishing parental trust. In this way, the school made it clear that the programme is not a hidden disciplinary tool, but a transparent and jointly accepted pedagogical practice.

### *5.1. Initial Concerns and Misunderstandings*

During the initial phase of implementation, misunderstandings arose among both pupils and some teachers. Many children initially interpreted being directed to the Silent Study Hall as a form of punishment. This reaction is understandable: in school culture, the experience that removal from the classroom means a sanction is deeply rooted. Accordingly, some pupils arrived in the space tense, defensive, and prepared for the expected consequence.

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Initial uncertainty also appeared among teachers. Several tended to interpret the programme as a local version of the Arizona Model and initially found it more difficult to distinguish between the two systems. This misunderstanding is not surprising, since both approaches involve temporary removal from the classroom. The different pedagogical logic became gradually clearer only through everyday practice.

### *5.2. The Turning Point: Surprise as an Educational Effect*

One of the most important and unexpected experiences of the implementation was the way pupils responded to the absence of punishment. Children who had expected a disciplinary consequence found silence, a task, and calm in the Silent Study Hall instead. For many of them, this surprise represented a turning point. They sat down, processed the tension, and after a few minutes began to work independently. At the end of the lesson, they returned to the class community.

This process carried a pedagogical message in itself. The children experienced that the space was not directed against them, but offered them a calmer opportunity for learning. Fear gradually eased, and the perception of the Silent Study Hall within the institution changed quickly.

### *5.3. Disruptive Behaviour and the Role Without an Audience*

In the case of students displaying genuinely disruptive behaviour, the experiences pointed to another important connection. In the classroom, disruptive behaviour is partly maintained by peer responses: laughter, attention, and counter-reactions may all reinforce the role that the student has constructed for themselves, in line with the basic behavioural insight that behaviour is maintained by its consequences (Alberto & Troutman, 2013; Skinner, 1953/2018). When the student was removed from this environment, the motivation to maintain the role weakened as well. In the Silent Study Hall, there is no audience, no feedback, and no one for whom to perform. Based on Kounin's classic observations, classroom behaviour cannot be interpreted solely at the level of the individual student, because teacher responses and student behaviours affect the functioning of the whole group. Disruptive behaviour often has a communal space and an audience: peers' attention, laughter, or counter-reactions may maintain a role from which the student finds it difficult to step away (Kounin, 1970). In such situations, the Silent Study Hall interrupts this group-dynamic cycle. The student concerned enters a space where the social reinforcement needed to maintain the role is no longer present, while the learning task remains

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in place. According to the observations, these students typically returned to themselves within a short time and began to engage with the assigned task.

This phenomenon is consistent with the observation in behavioural psychology that disruptive behaviour is partly sustained by social reinforcement. Based on implementation experiences, it appeared that when the source of social reinforcement disappeared, maintaining the disruptive role became more difficult as well. The Silent Study Hall therefore not only protects the learning of the class community, but may also interrupt the dynamic that had been feeding the disruptive behaviour.

In addition, students soon recognised that they had to account for the work completed. This awareness had a motivating effect in itself: time spent in the Silent Study Hall was not "free time", but a learning situation with academic consequences. This everyday mechanism is consistent with the finding in Hungarian educational literature that the effectiveness of learning depends to a considerable extent on the conscious shaping of motivational conditions (Réthy, 2003).

#### *5.4. The Emergence of Voluntary Use*

One of the most significant and unexpected developments of the programme was the emergence of voluntary use. Within a few weeks of its introduction, some students were already requesting access to the Silent Study Hall on their own initiative. The groups of students previously identified in relation to the scope of the programme—students in an individual learning arrangement, children experiencing more tiring days, and those seeking focused independent work—became regular voluntary users within a few weeks.

This development confirmed one of the programme's basic assumptions: the need for a calm, low-stimulus learning space is not linked exclusively to problematic situations. Rather, it represents a more general human and student need that regularly appears in everyday school life, but to which traditional classroom settings often struggle to respond.

#### *5.5. Teachers' Experiences*

According to teachers' feedback, one of the greatest values of the programme is that pupils do not fall out of the learning rhythm. In previous situations, persistent disruption could interrupt the work of the whole class: the teacher had to stop, respond, and then allow time for the lesson to return to its original direction. With the introduction of the Silent Study Hall, this dynamic changed. The pupil concerned is transferred to a different framework within a short time, the

class continues working, and the teacher is not forced to engage in prolonged conflict resolution in the middle of the lesson.

Teachers also perceived that the existence of an institutional protocol provides a sense of security in itself. In difficult classroom situations, they do not have to make decisions alone: there is a well-known, collectively accepted procedure they can rely on.

### 5.6. *The Impact of the Programme on the Institutional Climate*

Based on the experiences of the 2025/2026 school year, the school's teachers and leadership observed a noticeable change in the institutional atmosphere. Research on school climate suggests that a calm and supportive institutional climate is a key factor influencing both learning effectiveness and student well-being (Cohen et al., 2009; Thapa et al., 2013). Lessons became calmer, students returned to work more quickly even in more difficult situations, and students' perceptions of the Silent Study Hall shifted in a positive direction.

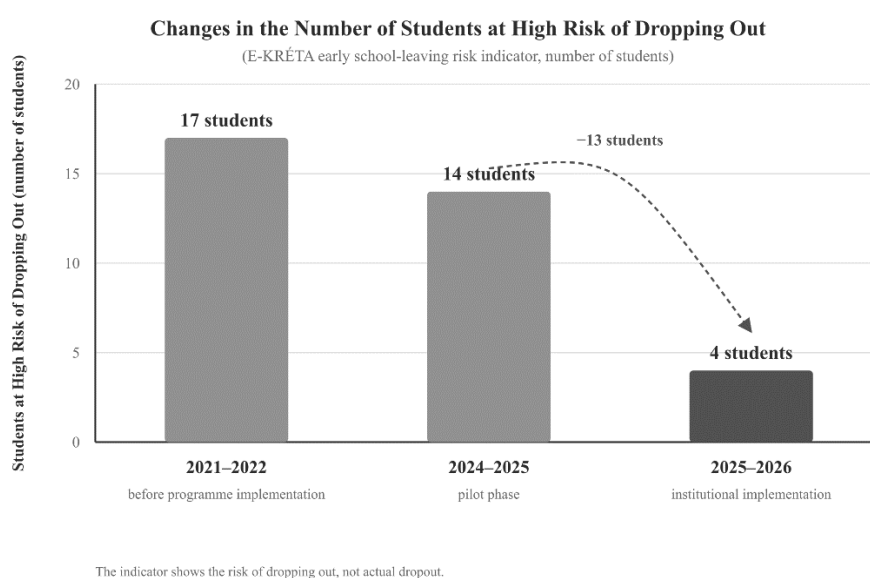


Fig. 4. Change in the number of high-risk students based on the early school-leaving risk indicator recorded in the E-KRÉTA system (number of students)

According to the early school-leaving risk indicators of the KRÉTA system, the number of students classified as high-risk decreased to 4 in the 2025/2026 school year, compared with 14 in the 2024/2025 school year prior to the programme's introduction, and 17 in the 2021/2022 school year. This change is noteworthy, but it should be interpreted with caution: the indicator measures the risk of early school leaving rather than actual dropout, and other development initiatives were underway at the institution at the same time. Therefore, in the absence of a control group or a comparison institution, the independent effect of the Silent Study Hall cannot

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be isolated. Parallel institutional developments and changes in student composition may have also influenced the change in the indicator.

### *5.7. Lessons Learned from the Implementation*

Based on implementation experiences, several lessons can be drawn that may also be relevant to other institutions. Parental information and written consent are not merely formal steps, but tools for establishing trust. Without a shared interpretation within the teaching community, the programme can easily drift away from its original purpose; therefore, continuous staff-level consultation is essential both before and during implementation. For pupils, prior explanation of the expectations reduces fear and resistance. Finally, the conscious creation and protection of the possibility of voluntary use is what makes the programme a genuine learning-protection tool and distinguishes it from traditional practices of sending pupils out of the classroom.

## **6. Pedagogical Significance and Expected Effects**

One of the most direct pedagogical effects of the Silent Study Hall programme is the protection of classroom learning time. In school practice, a disruptive situation rarely lasts only a few seconds in a lesson. The teacher stops, responds, students' attention shifts, the group's mood changes, and time is needed for the lesson to return to its original rhythm. If this occurs repeatedly, the loss can be measured not only in time but also in the quality of learning. The programme enables the teacher to preserve the learning process through a brief, predictable institutional protocol, rather than spending a significant part of the lesson on the prolonged management of conflict. From the perspective of Kounin's theory, the programme's most important value lies in protecting the continuity of the lesson: the Silent Study Hall shortens escalation, relieves pressure in the classroom, and allows the teacher to continue guiding the group's learning (Kounin, 1970).

This effect is particularly important for students who are ready to work, wish to make progress, and become passive sufferers of classroom disruptions. The Silent Study Hall also protects their right to learn. For them, the programme sends the message that the school notices children who are ready to learn and does not allow the conditions of communal learning to be persistently undermined.

For teachers, one of the programme's greatest values is the institutional support it provides. Disruptive classroom situations often become especially burdensome because the teacher is left to deal with them alone. At the same time, the teacher must teach, attend to the group, manage the conflict, maintain their own composure, and support the student concerned. The Silent Study

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Hall conveys to teachers that the handling of difficult situations does not depend solely on their personal capacity to endure them. The institution provides a shared protocol, a shared language, and shared responsibility. Based on the implementation experiences, this function also became tangible for teachers. They can rely not on an immediate emotional response but on a predetermined procedure, which reduces the risk of personal confrontation and protects the teacher-student relationship.

From the perspective of the student concerned, the significance of the programme lies in the fact that the consequence is connected directly to learning, not to the person. The child does not experience being "bad" and therefore removed, but rather that, in the given situation, they need a different learning framework. The programme responds to the situation, not to the person. This helps to avoid labelling and preserves the possibility that the child may engage differently in the next situation.

Contemporary classroom management research also suggests that student engagement is strengthened most effectively by approaches that foreground teacher support, student autonomy, the conscious management of social dynamics, positive reinforcement, restorative perspectives, and equity (Wilkins et al., 2023). The implementation experiences showed that students typically calmed down within a short time in the Silent Study Hall and returned to the learning task. In several cases, the reduction in social reinforcement may have contributed to the regulation of behavioural patterns previously maintained by the classroom environment. This experience suggests that, in many cases, disruptive behaviour is not driven by ill intent but by emotional overload or role-playing arising from the dynamics of the situation.

The programme may also be expected to strengthen students' self-regulation, particularly when it is implemented consistently, with calm communication and feedback. The child can experience that there are boundaries to classroom behaviour, without these boundaries being presented in a humiliating form. In the longer term, the student may also learn that the obligation to learn remains in force even when cooperation temporarily fails in a given situation. This experience is not an abstract moral lesson, but a concrete and recurring one: what I have not completed, I must make up.

At the institutional level, one of the programme's expected effects is more consistent case management. Recent PBIS research examines student behaviour not as an isolated disciplinary issue, but in the context of the school learning environment, social-emotional skills, and institutional functioning (Karlberg et al., 2024). The existence of a shared protocol reduces the

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uncertainty that may arise in students when teachers respond differently. Through documentation, patterns become visible that would otherwise remain scattered teacher impressions. It may become apparent that a student consistently encounters difficulty at the same time of day, struggles in particular subjects, or becomes more burdened after a specific social conflict. Recognising such patterns is more important than evaluating individual cases in isolation. In this way, the programme functions not only as an intervention tool but also as a pedagogical signalling system.

Lessons became calmer, teachers handled difficult situations with greater confidence, and students' perception of the Silent Study Hall shifted clearly in a positive direction. A single indicator cannot measure these changes, and their causal relationship with the programme cannot be proven with complete certainty. Nevertheless, they are important signals indicating that the programme fits the institution's pedagogical culture and addresses a genuine need.

It is important to emphasise that the effects of the Silent Study Hall are not automatic, and that the programme is not a magic solution. Its effectiveness depends on the extent to which the institution operates it consistently, proportionately, and with a focus on learning. If the space becomes merely a place to send students out, it loses its pedagogical strength. If there is no learning task, the learning-protection function disappears. If there is no documentation, patterns remain invisible. If there is no re-engagement, the transfer may be experienced as an act of exclusion.

A particularly important question is the extent to which the consistently implemented programme contributes to the development of student self-regulation, the reduction of early school leaving, and the lasting improvement of the institutional climate. These questions indicate the next steps in the scientific evaluation of this good practice.

## **7. Adaptability in Other Institutions**

One important condition for interpreting the Silent Study Hall as a good practice is that it should not appear solely as an internal response to the specific situation of a single institution, but as a model that can also be understood and adapted by other schools. Adaptability, however, does not mean that the programme can be transferred mechanically and without modification to any institution. The most important transferable element of the good practice is not the room itself but the underlying approach: learning protection, the maintenance of pupil responsibility, and the simultaneous provision of opportunities for reintegration. These three basic principles can

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be interpreted in any institution, regardless of the size of the school, the composition of its pupil population, or its material conditions.

### *7.1. Preconditions for Implementation*

The first and most important precondition for introducing the programme is a shared interpretation among the teaching staff. Teachers need to clarify together what they understand by the persistent hindrance of collective learning, which classroom-based tools should precede transfer, in what situations the use of the Silent Study Hall becomes justified, and how the process should be communicated. If teachers attribute different meanings to the system, pupils will also experience it as unpredictable. A shared pedagogical interpretation creates the sense of security on which the programme's operation can be built.

The second precondition is the establishment of a local regulatory framework. The Silent Study Hall can operate transparently only if it is clearly included in the institution's internal documents, school rules, or procedural regulations. It must be precisely recorded for what purpose it may be used, who may initiate the transfer, who provides supervision, within what time frame it operates, which learning task is attached to it, how documentation occurs, and when parental notification is required.

The third precondition is parental information. Based on the experiences of Vásárhelyi András Primary School, involving parents and using a written declaration are important not only from an ethical point of view, but also for the long-term acceptance of the programme. If parents understand the programme's purpose and logic in advance, they are less likely to interpret it negatively when their child uses the space.

### *7.2. Establishing the Space and Supervision*

The physical space may be simple, but it should be designed consciously. In a smaller institution, a designated corner of a teacher's room or developmental support room may be sufficient, provided that it functions as a supervised learning space during specified periods. In a larger school, a separate room, a supervision schedule, and a digital documentation system may also be established. In every case, the essential point is that the space should be calm, orderly, and suitable for work, and that it should be clearly distinguished from both the image of a punishment room and that of a rest area.

Establishing the system of supervision represents the greatest practical challenge in many institutions. During the adaptation of the programme, planning must be realistic: it is not enough to designate a room unless it is ensured that learning takes place there under adult supervision.

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Supervision may operate on a rotating basis, may be linked to duty arrangements, study hall tasks, or the work of a pedagogical assistant.

### *7.3. Age-Related Considerations*

In the lower primary grades, a shorter time frame, more adult support, and simpler task assignment are required. In the upper primary grades, greater emphasis may be placed on independent task completion, make-up work, and the documentation of pupil responsibility. In every case, the essential point is to preserve the basic principle: a quiet, supervised learning space with a route back to the community.

### *7.4. The Process of Implementation*

For introducing the programme at other institutions, a multi-step process is recommended. As a first step, the school leadership and the teaching community jointly identify the problem: which classroom situations recur, what tools are currently available, and where teachers experience the greatest difficulties. As a second step, a shared pedagogical interpretation is developed. As a third step, a brief operational protocol is prepared. As a fourth step, the space, supervision, and documentation are designated. As a fifth step, pupils and parents are informed. This is followed by a trial period, which concludes with evaluation and, where necessary, modification.

### *7.5. Possible Risks*

During adaptation, several typical risks need to be considered. The risk of overuse arises when the Silent Study Hall becomes a routine response and loses its exceptional, learning-protection character. The risk of underuse appears when teachers are uncertain about its application, and the programme does not provide real support in difficult classroom situations. The absence of a learning task may render the programme an empty shell. The lack of reintegration may make the procedure stigmatising.

The issue of equity risk deserves particular attention. In the international literature, practices involving separation from the classroom have been criticised partly because some studies suggest that certain groups of pupils, including pupils with special educational needs, disadvantaged pupils, or pupils with behavioural difficulties, are disproportionately more likely to be placed in such situations (Skiba et al., 2016). The Silent Study Hall programme can be defended against this criticism if the regular analysis of documentation also examines whether the distribution of transfers is proportionate to the composition of the pupil population. If certain pupils are repeatedly and disproportionately directed to the Silent Study Hall, this should be

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interpreted not as a disciplinary issue but as a matter of support requiring immediate pedagogical, developmental, or child-protection intervention.

These risks do not argue against the programme; rather, they point to the need for careful implementation and continuous evaluation.

### *7.6. Conditions for Sustainability*

From a sustainability perspective, it is important that the programme not depend on a single school leader or an enthusiastic teacher. A good practice becomes institutional when its operation is understood, accepted, and maintainable by several actors. This requires a written protocol, introductory workshops, regular discussion of experiences, and ensuring that new colleagues also become familiar with the purpose of the programme. If the Silent Study Hall becomes part of the shared institutional language, it no longer depends solely on the presence of particular individuals. The ultimate condition for the programme's adaptability is fidelity to its underlying approach. Each institution may adjust the details to its own possibilities: the room, the supervision system, the form of documentation, or the parental information procedure may differ. The basic principle, however, must remain intact. The Silent Study Hall must not become a punishment room, it must not function as a rest area, and it must not serve the long-term removal of the pupil from the class community. It should operate as a learning space that protects the class, upholds the pupil's responsibility, and prepares for reintegration.

## **8. Conclusions**

The Silent Study Hall programme can be interpreted as a school-based good practice that approaches the management of disruptive classroom situations not solely as a disciplinary issue, but in relation to the protection of the learning environment, the maintenance of student responsibility, and re-engagement with the community. The starting point of the programme is simple. However, it carries a significant pedagogical shift: if a student is temporarily unable to function according to the rules of communal learning during a particular lesson, they do not drop out of the learning process. They continue their work in another space, under different conditions and supervision, and then return to the community.

One of the most important claims of the concept presented in this study is that protecting the learning environment is not incompatible with supporting the child. In school practice, the issue often appears to be a choice between the class community and the student concerned. According to the perspective of the Silent Study Hall, this opposition is not pedagogically productive. The school's task is not to assert one child's interests against another's, but to create a framework in

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which the community's learning is protected while the student concerned does not lose the possibility of re-engagement.

The programme's professional novelty lies primarily in how it interprets temporary withdrawal from the classroom as a learning-organisation intervention. At the same time, it is important to emphasise that the Silent Study Hall is not a sensory therapy room and does not replace specialised educational, psychological, or developmental professional support. From the perspective of sensory regulation, it primarily adopts the pedagogical insight that reducing environmental demands may, in certain situations, be a prerequisite for returning to learning work. The emphasis is not on being sent out, on dramatising rule violation, or on the immediate analysis of the student's behaviour, but on ensuring that learning is not interrupted. This approach distinguishes the Silent Study Hall from the classical logic of the Arizona Programme and provides the basis for presenting it as a good practice. The experiences gained at Vásárhelyi András Primary School confirmed the programme's pedagogical logic in several respects. The students' initial fear and surprise at the absence of punishment had an educational effect in themselves: they showed that the school can respond to difficult situations differently from what children may previously have experienced. In cases of students displaying disruptive behaviour, observations suggested that the disappearance of social reinforcement may have helped regulate behaviour without the need for prolonged confrontation. The emergence of voluntary use also indicated that the need for a calm learning space is a more general one, to which traditional school frameworks do not always respond. According to teachers' feedback, the greatest value of the programme lies in the presence of institutional support. The shared protocol not only helps to manage classroom situations but also strengthens teachers' professional sense of security. The noticeable improvement in the institutional climate and the calmer functioning of lessons are observations from which causal conclusions cannot be drawn without a controlled study; nevertheless, they are important indications that the programme fits the institution's functioning.

The Silent Study Hall cannot be regarded as a complete solution in itself to all classroom behavioural problems. Behavioural difficulties may occur at a level that exceeds the framework of the Silent Study Hall. The programme does not replace good classroom pedagogy, differentiation, the recognition of learning difficulties, child protection work, relationship-building by class teachers, or cooperation with parents. Its value lies precisely in providing a clear institutional response to a well-defined situation: when communal learning can no longer

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be maintained within the given classroom framework. At the same time, the student's learning responsibility cannot be suspended.

A longitudinal study has been launched in the institution to examine the programme's longer-term effects. A particularly important question is the extent to which the consistently implemented programme contributes to the development of student self-regulation, the reduction of early school leaving, and the lasting improvement of the institutional climate. These questions indicate the next steps in the scientific evaluation of this good practice and also invite other institutions to document and share their own experiences.

The programme's future development direction is the digitalisation of the documentation system and its integration into the WTCAi pedagogical assessment system, which would enable data-driven institutional analysis and longer-term impact assessment (Karl, Nagy & Molnár, 2024; Karl, Nagy, Molnár & Szűts, 2024). The programme's adaptability stems from its being a low-cost intervention that requires no special infrastructure. What is primarily needed is a shared pedagogical approach, a clear protocol, a designated learning space, supervision, simple documentation, and consistent communication. These elements can be established in schools of different sizes and profiles. The details may vary from institution to institution. However, the basic principle remains unchanged: learning should not stop, the student's responsibility should remain in force, and the path to re-engagement should be ensured.

The ultimate pedagogical message of the Silent Study Hall can be summarised briefly: learning does not stop. Beyond the programme's practical operation, this sentence can also be understood as an educational credo. It means that the school does not allow the learning process to fall apart even in difficult situations. It means that the community's right to learn is a protected value. It means that the student's responsibility does not cease even when they must temporarily work within a different framework. Finally, it also means that every child must retain a path back to the community and to learning. The programme is not exclusionary but retains its character: it keeps the lesson within learning, keeps the community engaged in work, and keeps the student within the pedagogical process. The professional strength of the Silent Study Hall, and the basis for presenting it as a good practice, lies in this threefold retaining function.

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experience and cooperation the pedagogical solution described here could not have become interpretable and describable in this form.

### **Ethics Statement**

The study does not contain any original experimental research conducted on human or animal subjects. The article is based on the professional presentation and interpretation of an institutional pedagogical practice; therefore, no separate ethical approval was required for its preparation. The documentation sheets, student conversations, and teacher feedback used in the study were generated as part of the institution's pedagogical documentation practice regulated by the school rules, with prior written information and consent from parents. The study reports information from these sources exclusively in aggregated and anonymised form, in a manner that does not allow personal identification.

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### **Declaration of Interest**

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this article.

### **Data Protection Statement**

The pedagogical practice presented in the study operates as part of an officially regulated procedure incorporated into the institution's school rules. All parents and pupils concerned received official information about the programme and acknowledged it with their signatures. The institution holds the necessary parental consent forms. The manuscript does not contain any individual, personally identifiable data, case descriptions, images, or special categories of data relating to pupils, parents, or teachers. The study presents the programme's institutional operations, pedagogical purpose, and professional experiences in a generalised form, with respect for the personality rights and data protection considerations of those concerned.

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