



# Planning the School Guidance Programme

National Centre for Guidance in Education  
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National Centre for Guidance in Education  
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# Foreword



I am very pleased to present this publication *Planning the School Guidance Programme* which has been prepared in the light of the requirements of sections 9 (c) and 21 of the Education Act 1998. The publication will assist schools greatly in developing their guidance plan as part of the overall School Plan.

The writing of *Planning the School Guidance Programme* was co-ordinated by the National Centre for Guidance in Education, with inputs from the relevant stakeholders. I am most grateful to all who contributed to this work for their effort and commitment to the task.

Guidance planning is a whole-school activity and is an integral part of the School Development Plan. The guidance plan offers both a challenge and an opportunity for schools to develop programmes that ensure all students have access to appropriate guidance.

As these programmes require regular review and updating to ensure continued relevance to the ever-changing needs of the students in the school, the guidance plan is always a work in progress.

As this document demonstrates, guidance planning draws not only on the expertise of the guidance counsellor but it also involves school management, staff, parents and students. I am certain that this document will be a valuable resource for all involved in guidance planning in schools. It will also assist in the implementation of improved guidance programmes to assist all students in their transitions as they progress from primary to second level and on to further study and employment.

I would like to congratulate the National Centre for Guidance in Education on the publication of *Planning the School Guidance Programme*.

Noel Dempsey, T.D.  
Minister for Education and  
Science

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# Introduction

It is now widely recognised that guidance is an essential part of the learning process. The guidance service in Irish second level schools is well established and offers significant support to students as they make important choices which will have lifelong implications for them.

The purpose of this publication is to help schools plan their guidance programmes in a productive manner. Guidance planning should draw on contributions from school management, guidance counsellors, all school staff, parents and the students themselves. The outcome should be a well-structured guidance plan which organises the resources of the school to the best effect in meeting students' needs.

No two schools are identical, and there is no such thing as an off-the-shelf guidance plan. This publication should help each school to analyse its particular context and circumstances, and to arrive at its own unique plan. The effort

involved will be repaid handsomely in the quality of the guidance programme which results.

The process of devising this publication was a careful one, and involved widespread consultation. The experience gained through a pilot project on School Guidance Review conducted by the National Centre for Guidance in Education was of great benefit and fed into the development of this publication. The staff and Management Committee of the NCGE and the Inspectors of Guidance from the Department of Education and Science have steered the document to its final form with great diligence.

The Education Act 1998 requires that students have access to appropriate guidance. A school which plans its programme in accordance with the advice in this document will be giving itself the best foundation for delivering that entitlement to its students.

Ed Riordan  
Chairperson  
NCGE

# Glossary

<b>DES</b>	Department of Education and Science
<b>FÁS</b>	Training and Employment Authority
<b>HSCL</b>	Home School Community Liaison
<b>GEI</b>	Guidance Enhancement Initiative
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communication Technologies
<b>IGC</b>	Institute of Guidance Counsellors
<b>JCSP</b>	Junior Certificate School Programme
<b>LCA</b>	Leaving Certificate Applied
<b>LCVP</b>	Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme
<b>LES</b>	Local Employment Service
<b>NCGE</b>	National Centre for Guidance in Education
<b>NCTE</b>	National Centre for Technology in Education
<b>NDP</b>	National Development Plan
<b>NEPS</b>	National Educational Psychological Service
<b>PLC</b>	Post-Leaving Certificate
<b>SDPI</b>	School Development Planning Initiative
<b>SGR</b>	School Guidance Review
<b>SPHE</b>	Social, Personal and Health Education
<b>TYP</b>	Transition Year Programme

CHAPTER 1

# Rationale and Context





# Rationale and context

## 1.1 OVERVIEW

The purpose of this document is to provide schools and all interested parties with a comprehensive aid to understanding, developing and implementing a school's guidance plan. This publication supersedes the 1996 *Guidelines for the Practice of Guidance and Counselling in Schools*.

Schools are required in accordance with the Education Act (1998) to 'ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance' (Section 9c)<sup>1</sup>, with the consequence that guidance is an integral part of a school's curricular activities. The Act also requires schools to develop a school plan based on the needs of the school<sup>2</sup>. The overall school plan should make specific reference to guidance and should incorporate a school guidance plan. The guidance planning process which is the subject of this publication will enable a school to define its priorities and to best deploy the resources available to it.

Throughout this publication the following terminology will be used. These terms will be explained in more detail in later Chapters.

### GUIDANCE IN SCHOOLS

Refers to a range of learning experiences provided in a developmental sequence that assist students to make choices (personal and social, educational and career) about their lives and to make transitions consequent on these choices.

### THE SCHOOL GUIDANCE PROGRAMME

Guidance is provided through the school guidance programme. The guidance programme is the specific set of learning experiences which a school provides in response to the guidance needs of its students.

### THE SCHOOL GUIDANCE PLAN

The school guidance plan is the document in which the school, in a systematic way, defines the guidance programme it offers, and states how resources are organised to deliver the programme. It should include:

- Aims
- Objectives
- Resources
- Target groups
- Activities
- Review

**In short: the school guidance plan is the document which defines the school guidance programme.**

### BENEFITS OF THE SCHOOL GUIDANCE PLAN

A school guidance plan:

**provides direction** - states the objectives and priorities of the provision of guidance in a school

**enhances** the provision of guidance by targeting the needs of students

**focuses** the school's resources to where they are needed most

**allows** staff to contribute to developments and changes in a positive and collaborative way

THE SCHOOL GUIDANCE PLAN IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE SCHOOL PLAN.

<sup>1</sup> Education Act, 1988. Section 9c

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. Section 21.

# context

## Rationale and context

### context

## Rationale and context

### 1.2 POLICY DEVELOPMENTS AND RECENT INITIATIVES / STUDIES

This section gives a brief overview of relevant policy developments, studies and initiatives that form the background and context for *Planning the School Guidance Programme*.

#### 1.2.1 POLICY

##### EDUCATION ACT, 1998

The Education Act requires the Board of Management of a school to develop a school plan based on the needs of the school. The school guidance plan forms part of the school plan. Schools are required by the Act to "ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance" (Section 9c). The Act outlines the responsibilities and functions of the Minister of Education and Science and of Schools in respect of guidance.

The Department of Education and Science's *Guidelines for Second Level Schools on the implications of Section 9 (c) of the Education Act (1998), relating to students' access to appropriate guidance* should be consulted in this regard.

#### 1.2.2 RECENT INITIATIVES AND STUDIES

##### SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING INITIATIVE (SDPI), 1999

In May 1999 the Department of Education and Science announced a package to promote School Development Planning in first and second level schools.

##### SCHOOL GUIDANCE REVIEW PILOT PROJECT (SGR), 1999-2000

The aim of the project co-ordinated by the NCGE was to assist schools to identify and plan a response to the changing guidance needs and competencies of students through the school's guidance programme.

##### PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE GUIDANCE SERVICE IN POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS, 1998

This study highlighted the fact that most guidance planning in schools was informal.

##### AUDIT OF GUIDANCE IN POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS, 2000

An Audit of guidance provision in post-primary schools was conducted at request of the Department of Education and Science (DES) by the NCGE in 1999-2000.

##### GUIDANCE ENHANCEMENT INITIATIVE (GEI), 2001

103 second level schools benefited from the GEI which commenced in August 2001. These schools were granted additional guidance resources from the DES based on the submission of a detailed proposal.

##### MAKING A EUROPEAN AREA OF LIFELONG LEARNING A REALITY, 2001

This policy document by the European Commission recognises the importance of guidance as a key element of lifelong learning.

(please consult Appendix I)



CHAPTER 2

# Guidance in Schools



# Guidance in schools

## 2.1 WHAT IS GUIDANCE IN SCHOOLS?

Guidance refers to a range of learning experiences provided in a developmental sequence, designed to assist students to make choices about their lives and to make transitions consequent on these choices. These choices may be categorised into three separate but interlinked areas:

- personal and social
- educational
- career.

Guidance provision in schools involves a range of guidance and counselling activities and services [see the Department of Education and Science's *Guidelines for Second Level Schools on the implications of Section 9 (c) of the Education Act (1998), relating to students' access to appropriate guidance (Section 1)* for an overview on the importance of guidance]. The terms 'guidance counselling' and 'guidance and counselling' are covered by this definition and are synonymous with the range of activities set out below. In this publication, the term 'guidance' is used for simplicity and encompasses that broad range of activities.

### 2.1.1 GUIDANCE ACTIVITIES THAT ASSIST STUDENTS TO MAKE CHOICES INCLUDE:

- **Assessment** - helping students to obtain a better self-understanding through the use of psychometric tests and other inventories.
  - **Information** - providing students with objective and factual data on education and training opportunities, occupations, labour market information, entitlements etc.
  - **Advice** - making suggestions based on the advisor's own knowledge and experience.
  - **Educational Development Programmes** - facilitating the transfer of knowledge and skills relating to studying, examination performance, choices of subjects and levels.
  - **Personal and Social Development Programmes** - facilitating the transfer of knowledge and skills relating to a student's personal and social development, self-awareness, decision-making and planning.
  - **Referral** - this includes two types of activity:
    - i) referral of an individual student by the guidance counsellor to other Professionals outside of the school, e.g. The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS);
    - ii) referral of an individual student to the guidance counsellor by teachers, Board of Management, school management, and parents. The voluntary participation in counselling of the referred student must be respected by all concerned.
- **Counselling** - helping students to explore their thoughts and feelings, and the choices open to them; giving care and support to students learning to cope with the many aspects of growing up.

# Guidance in schools

## Guidance in schools

### 2.1.2 GUIDANCE ACTIVITIES THAT ASSIST STUDENTS TO MAKE TRANSITIONS INCLUDE:

- **Careers education/career transition programmes** - enabling students to make transitions to further and higher education, training and employment.
- **Placement** - work experience, work shadowing, and preparing students for employment.
- **Follow-up** - following up former students regarding progression routes and destinations.

### 2.1.3 OTHER GUIDANCE ACTIVITIES THAT SUPPORT THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE AIMS OF THE SCHOOL GUIDANCE PROGRAMME INCLUDE:

- **Consultation** with parents, school staff and students.
- **Feedback** - giving feedback to the Board of Management, school management and staff on the needs of individual students, groups and the school as an organisation, and how the school guidance programme has supported students' choices and transitions.
- **Networking** - establishing links with employers, relevant agencies and institutions to enhance guidance work with students.
- **Promoting change** - assisting curriculum development in the school.
- **Managing, organising and co-ordinating** guidance activities into a coherent programme.

2.1.4 The nature and range of guidance activities outlined in 2.1.1 to 2.1.3 above are based on the premise that guidance is both a whole school concern and a specialist area within education.



## CHAPTER 3

# The School Guidance Plan

*This chapter explains the components of and the planning of a school guidance programme.*





# School guidance plan

**3.1 THE SCHOOL GUIDANCE PROGRAMME** is the specific set of learning experiences which a school provides in response to the guidance needs of its students. There are a number of principles that underpin the school guidance programme.

## PRINCIPLES

The school guidance programme should:

- Be accessible
- Recognise that guidance is a specialist area within education
- Recognise that guidance is a whole school concern
- Be impartial
- Be student centred
- Be transparent
- Be balanced
- Be inclusive
- Be responsive
- Respect confidentiality in counselling and assessment activities
- Empower participants to take responsibility for their own development
- Promote equal opportunities
- Deploy and make full use of available resources
- Be reviewed on an ongoing basis

## 3.2 WHAT IS THE SCHOOL GUIDANCE PLAN?

The school guidance plan is a structured document that describes the school guidance programme and specifies how the guidance needs of students are to be addressed. The school guidance plan is drawn up in consultation with all school partners in order to ensure that it reflects the identified needs of students. The school guidance plan is an integral part of the school's overall plan. It is developmental by design and includes sequential activities organised and

implemented as a collaborative effort by guidance counsellors, teachers, school management and the Board of Management, programme teams, students and parents. The various roles are defined in more detail in section 4.

The school guidance plan outlines and describes the guidance programme, that is, the full range of activities through which the school addresses the needs of the students by helping them in their personal and social, educational and career development.

## 3.3 KEY ELEMENTS OF THE SCHOOL GUIDANCE PLAN

The school guidance plan should address the following questions:

- (i) What does the school aim to provide through its guidance programme? (AIMS)
- (ii) Who/which persons are the priorities for benefiting from the provision? (TARGET GROUPS)
- (iii) Which guidance outcomes are intended for the target groups? (OBJECTIVES)
- (iv) How are these guidance outcomes to be achieved? (ACTIVITIES)
- (v) What resources are available to support these outcomes? (RESOURCES)
- (vi) How does a school find out if the objectives have been achieved? (MONITORING AND REVIEW)

### 3.3.1 AIMS

The aims can be derived from a variety of sources, contexts and players for example:

- (i) The definition of guidance as per 2.1 above.
- (ii) The Education Act (1998) as per 1.2.1 above.
- (iii) The Department of Education and Science's *Guidelines for Second Level Schools on the implications of Section 9 (c)*

# School guidance plan

## School guidance plan

of the Education Act (1998), relating to students' access to appropriate guidance.

- (iv) The school's mission statement, vision and fundamental aims as per the school plan.
- (v) The specific social and economic environment in which the school operates.
- (vi) The views of school partners (students, parents, staff, management, local community) on how existing resource provision can best be utilised.
- (vii) The identified needs of target groups.
- (viii) The demands of the local/regional, national, social and economic environments.
- (ix) The school's current guidance programme.

### 3.3.2 TARGET GROUPS

One of the principal benefits of the school guidance plan is that available resources are utilised to meet identified needs and priorities. The school guidance programme should take into account the needs of all students at all levels within the school. The programme should provide a balance in the personal and social, educational and career guidance offered.

Within the resources available for guidance, schools may need to prioritise certain groups of students during the school year. Prioritising is a value judgement made by the school in terms of its overall mission, the needs identified, the resources available, and the local, national, social and economic environment in which the school operates. These decisions should be based in particular on the aims of the school guidance plan. In setting priorities schools should carefully

consider the needs of the community in which the school is based and also national priorities. For example, both the *National Development Plan (NDP)* and the *New Deal on Educational Disadvantage* have identified assisting young people at risk as a priority for school guidance services.

### 3.3.3 OBJECTIVES (GUIDANCE OUTCOMES)

Once the aims and target groups are clear, the next issue is to decide on specific guidance outcomes for particular target groups. Objectives (guidance outcomes) should be set corresponding to each aim and should take into account available resources. Objectives should be clear, realistic, specific and measurable and have a timeframe. In general, objectives should be framed in active language and should list competencies such as to *identify, acquire, demonstrate, know, develop, compare and contrast, etc.* The Department of Education and Science's *Guidelines for Second Level Schools on the implications of Section 9 (c) of the Education Act (1998), relating to students' access to appropriate guidance* contains valuable information on knowledge, skills and competencies for the various stages of second level education.

### 3.3.4 GUIDANCE ACTIVITIES

A very broad range of guidance activities can be called into play as the means by which the objectives are to be realised. Please refer to:

- 2.1.1:** Guidance activities that assist students to make choices
- 2.1.2:** Guidance activities that assist students to make transitions
- 2.1.3:** Other guidance activities that support the achievement of the aims of the school guidance programme.

# School guidance plan

### 3.3.5 RESOURCES

Resources describe the personnel, time allocation, equipment, materials, physical locations and finance required for the performance of the guidance activities and the management of the school guidance programme.

#### *School and Community Resources*

- Board of Management and Principal.
- Guidance counsellor(s).
- Subject teachers and the learning support teacher(s).
- Staff with formal roles (year head, class tutor, etc).
- In-school programme support teams.
- Parents.
- Students.
- School budget – part of the school budget should be dedicated for the purchase of materials for guidance e.g. psychometric tests, career materials.
- The guidance suite (office, careers library etc).
- Classrooms.
- Computer facilities - access by students for guidance purposes should be standard in both the school guidance plan and in the school's ICT plan.
- Community (workplace, referral, etc).

#### *National Resources*

- The Department of Education and Science, agencies such as the National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE), the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), the National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE).
- Professional bodies and associations such as the Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC), teacher unions and management bodies.

- The School Development Planning Initiative and other national initiatives' support teams.
- ICT, video and printed national resources.
- Test materials.

Included in the appendices of this publication is a questionnaire to examine the resources available for the provision of guidance in the school (Appendix II, Form B). This questionnaire can be adapted to suit the needs of the school.

### 3.3.6 MONITORING AND REVIEW

The school guidance plan must make provision for ongoing monitoring (on an annual basis) and review (a major re-design on a longer timescale, perhaps every three years). A school needs to identify (i) the extent to which guidance objectives are being achieved, (ii) the factors that facilitate or hinder that achievement, and (iii) unplanned outcomes, unmet needs, and possibly new/emerging target groups. This process assists the school in forward planning so that the school guidance programme remains relevant to the needs of the students.

There are different ways in which monitoring and review may be supported, for example:

- Soliciting the views of school partners.
- Development of a summary report of activity with a critical analysis by the guidance counsellor.
- Follow up studies of the target groups.

Monitoring should be an on-going activity. A written report for the Board of Management of the school should be prepared on a regular basis e.g. annually.

CHAPTER 4

# Defining Roles in the School Guidance Programme



# Defining roles

## Defining roles

### 4.1 ROLE OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT, STAFF AND THE EDUCATION PARTNERS

**4.1.1** *The Board of Management and school management team* have a responsibility to ensure that the provision and practice of guidance in the school is of the highest possible standard. This includes managing the process of guidance planning in co-operation with the guidance counsellor, school staff<sup>1</sup> and other school partners such as parents. Each school is required to comply with the Education Act (1998) and provide students with "access to appropriate guidance".

**4.1.2** *Guidance counsellors* because of their specialist training have a professional role in each of the main areas of guidance: personal and social, educational, and career. In addition the guidance counsellor has a key role in collaborating with school management in the development and review of the school guidance plan and the integration of guidance into the curriculum. This role of the guidance counsellor is explored in more detail in section 4.2 below.

**4.1.3** *Subject teachers* may have a key role in providing support to students and information and advice relating to their subject disciplines and related careers. Some teachers have additional formal responsibilities through management, pastoral care roles, co-ordination roles and through participation in programmes such as SPHE. Individual teachers may be sought out by students on an informal basis for advice and information. All teachers may consult

with the guidance counsellor on the needs of an individual student and/or refer the student to the guidance counsellor when specialist competence is required with due regard to confidentiality.

**4.1.4** *Parents* have by far the most influence, directly or indirectly, on the choices made by young people. Parents have a major influence on the environment in which the young person lives including values, attitudes and lifestyle. Parents have an important part to play in helping to establish the needs and priorities of the school guidance programme and in supporting the programme. Parents can also participate in the guidance process through

- (i) Consultation with the guidance counsellor and other school staff.
- (ii) Attendance at relevant information and other meetings at school.
- (iii) Contributing to the development and review of the school guidance plan.  
*and when possible*
- (iv) Providing personal assistance to the school guidance programme.

**4.1.5** *Students* are the focus of the school guidance programme and are entitled to have an input into the development of the school guidance plan. In particular, students (through the Student Council) can help to identify and establish the needs and priorities of the guidance programme. Their feedback in the review process is also highly important.

**4.1.6** The *local community* through its agencies, organisations and institutions provides young people with resources for career

<sup>1</sup> (particularly Home-School-Community Liaison - HSCL, Pastoral Care, Learning Support Teacher, and Programme Co-ordinators for Transition Year Programme - TYP, Leaving Certificate Applied - LCA, Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme - LCV, Social, Personal and Health Education - SPHE).

# Roles

## Defining roles

### Defining roles

exploration, information and other forms of assistance and support. Such agencies, organisations and institutions include providers of training, further and higher education, employment and youth services.

**4.1.7** In some instances, the guidance needs of young people may require referral to professionals outside the school.

#### **4.2 THE ROLE OF THE GUIDANCE COUNSELLOR**

Guidance counsellors are professionally trained to undertake the following tasks within the school guidance programme:

**4.2.1 Counselling:** empowering students to make decisions, solve problems, change behaviours and resolve issues in their lives. Such activity may be personal counselling, educational counselling, career counselling, or it may involve combinations of each. Counselling is a key part of the school guidance programme, offered on an individual or group basis as part of a developmental learning process and at moments of personal crisis.

Counselling on an individual basis should be part of the support structure that a school provides to students. Within the overall time allocated for guidance, adequate time should be given for the counselling function in the guidance programme. The rationale for the time allocated and its usage should be evident in the school guidance plan. See the Department of Education and Science's *Guidelines for Second Level Schools on the*

*implications of Section 9 (c) of the Education Act (1998), relating to students' access to appropriate guidance.*

**4.2.2 Support:** The guidance counsellor provides support to parents, teachers, the school principal, Board of Management and referral agencies in assisting the personal and social, career and educational development of students. Such support may include advocacy on behalf of a student. Support also refers to assistance in the planning and development of SPHE, JCSP<sup>1</sup>, TYP, LCA, LCVP, PLC<sup>2</sup> guidance related activities.

**4.2.3 Assessment:** The guidance counsellor is trained to use a range of psychometric tests and other evaluative instruments to support relevant objectives of the school guidance programme. Such objectives may be related to career and educational planning, personal decision making and development of self-awareness.

**4.2.4 Information:** Assisting students to acquire, interpret and use information relevant to their personal and social, educational and career development.

**4.2.5 Classroom Guidance Activities:** Providing classroom based learning experiences that are relevant to the objectives of the school guidance programme. Such experiences may include information giving, information and communication technologies (ICT), skills development (e.g. planning, decision-making, study skills, communication, values clarification), and vocational preparation.

<sup>1</sup> JCSP - Junior Certificate School Programme

<sup>2</sup> PLC - Post - Leaving Certificate

#### **4.2.6 Planning and Organising Workplace**

**Learning:** Schools need to make provision for work based or work simulation learning experiences relevant to the personal and social, educational and career learning objectives of the school guidance programme. Such experiences include work experience, work shadowing, visits to workplaces, training centres and higher education institutes etc. The guidance counsellor should be involved and consulted in this field.

**4.2.7 Referrals:** Seeking for students the assistance of non-school based professionals e.g. NEPS, following standard procedures. The guidance counsellor also provides support for students referred to him/her by teachers, parents, and school management. The voluntary participation by the individual concerned should be respected.

**4.2.8 Professional Development:** The guidance counsellor should keep abreast of on-going changes in the fields of training, education, work and child welfare. The Board of Management and school management should facilitate the attendance of the guidance counsellor at relevant events and at in-career professional training during the school year. Participation in these events should be related to the objectives of the school guidance programme. Attendance at non-school based events should be negotiated/agreed in advance between the Board of Management, school management and the guidance counsellor.

CHAPTER 5

# The Planning Process

*This section examines the considerations that need to be taken into account in starting the guidance planning process*





# The planning process

## 5.1 TIMEFRAMES AND KEY STAGES

Schools should establish a timeframe for the development of the guidance plan and for its monitoring and review. This requires a significant time input by school staff. The amount of time will vary from school to school.

Some schools may already have a School Development Plan and/or a guidance programme in place that meets or partially addresses the model presented in this publication. For such schools an accelerated time frame may apply.

Table 1 represents an indicative timeframe for the different stages involved when developing a plan for the first time.

## 5.2 STARTING THE PLANNING PROCESS: ROLES

- The Board of Management through the Principal has a responsibility to initiate guidance planning, and to motivate staff to participate in the process.

- The guidance counsellor has a lead role to play in the process of guidance planning because of his/her specialist training and responsibilities.
- All staff in the school have a part to play in the guidance programme and should be encouraged to take an active part in the process.

## 5.3 CONSULTATIVE MECHANISMS - STAFF

It is vital to include staff from the earliest stages of the planning process, and to engage their participation. School staff will need to be:

- Briefed on provisions of the Education Act regarding guidance.
- Briefed on the current guidance service offered in the school.
- Briefed on what guidance planning is about.
- Invited to make their input into the guidance plan.

**TABLE ONE:**

INDICATIVE TIMEFRAME FOR STAGES OF THE FIRST TIME DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCHOOL GUIDANCE PLAN

STAGES OF THE GUIDANCE PLAN	YEAR 1			YEAR 2		
	TERM 1	TERM 2	TERM 3	TERM 1	TERM 2	TERM 3
1. Developing Rationale / Aims	✓					
2. Target Groups	✓					✓
3. Developing Objectives for the Guidance Plan	✓	✓	✓			✓
4. Developing Guidance Activities		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5. Identification of Resources		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6. Monitoring and Review				✓	✓	✓

Some of the activities overlap in the timeframe and some are continuous during the timeframe. The pace at which the school plan develops depends on the management and staff time available, whether the school has an existing school guidance plan, the stage the school is at in the development of the school plan etc. Some schools may therefore be in a position to expedite the process indicated in the table above.

# The planning process

## The planning process

Drawing on the experience of the School Guidance Review (SGR) the engagement and participation of all staff could be achieved by one of the following approaches.

- (i) The school principal and guidance counsellor meet in advance to plan the staff consultation exercise. A staff meeting is then held where staff divide into working groups. Each working group could focus on the guidance needs of a specific year group.

or

- (ii) A core staff group - e.g. guidance counsellor, year heads / pastoral care team meet in advance to draft a short document giving an overview of the current guidance provision and the guidance planning process. The document is then presented to staff meeting(s), school management, and the education partners for additional comments.

Schools will naturally devise their own variations on the above approaches. The important issue is to ensure broad consultation and the encouragement of a sense of school-wide ownership of guidance planning.

As the guidance planning process develops, each of the elements of the guidance plan will need to be addressed. These were set out in section 3.3 as follows:

- AIMS
- TARGET GROUPS
- OBJECTIVES
- ACTIVITIES
- RESOURCES
- MONITORING AND REVIEW

Each of these elements should be derived from the widest possible staff participation. This will reduce the possibilities of the guidance plan being marginalised. Such staff-wide participation should flow naturally from the initial approach outlined above.

### 5.4 GUIDANCE NEEDS ANALYSIS

There are many methods for establishing students' guidance needs:

- Consulting the Students' Council / surveying the students themselves.
- Consulting parents.
- Eliciting the needs of students through 'brainstorming' by staff.
- Consulting local employers.
- Consulting past students of the school.
- Consulting relevant advisory publications.

The ideal approach is to have a combination of these activities and methods.

The needs assessment can be conducted by interviews (this is time consuming but allows for in-depth information to be gathered), focus groups, or through the use of questionnaires. The participation of students in the process is strongly recommended.

Two of the schools in the SGR pilot project elicited the views of students in relation to their guidance needs. They found this to be a very useful exercise and discovered a number of student needs of which staff were not aware. Another school asked the Parents Council for their views and again found this to be very useful. In the pilot a number of instruments were created for the purposes of eliciting the needs of students through staff discussions. These can be found in Appendix II (Activities 2 & 4).

# The planning process

## 5.5 ADOPTION OF THE PLAN

Following a sufficient level of consultation, needs analysis and discussion, a draft school guidance plan should be prepared by a small steering group, ensuring that the elements in 3.3 are covered.

When the school guidance plan is drafted it is suggested that it be circulated to staff and the education partners for comment. The school guidance plan can then be refined and presented to the Board of Management. The Board of Management should formally adopt the school guidance plan.

The school guidance plan is an integral part of the School Development Plan and should be included in it appropriately (e.g. referenced in main text and detail given in the appendix) and should be made available to parents, students and local education partners.

## 5.6 FOLLOW UP ACTIONS AND REVIEW

### 5.6.1 Action Planning

Once adopted by the Board of Management, the guidance plan is a formal school document. A series of Actions, focusing on each aspect of the school guidance plan, should now be developed so that each identified need can be progressed to implementation. The benefits of this approach include:

- Each Action would deal with a specific need, and as such would assist the Plan's implementation on a phased basis.
- Each Action would operate within an agreed time frame.
- Each Action should be open to monitoring and review.

A template for typical Actions is provided in Appendix III.

### 5.6.2 Review/Redesign

The school guidance plan needs to be monitored on an ongoing basis as described in section 3.3.6. The need to comprehensively redesign a school guidance programme may become evident from the results of reviews and from changing social and economic conditions. Thus the school guidance plan may need to be rewritten to take account of new target groups of students, additional needs of students, and new priorities. It may become evident that certain guidance activities are more effective than others or that some objectives have become redundant through the passage of time. The guidance counsellor can also build up a picture of his/her guidance activities and assess if there is a need to refocus these in the context of the programme.

A major rewriting of the school guidance plan requires the same thorough approach as was used in creating the original school guidance plan. It is suggested therefore that this be undertaken as a consultative process involving all school partners. This may form part of the review cycle for the overall school plan.

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# Appendices

## Appendix I Support Initiatives and studies

### SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING INITIATIVE (SDPI), 1999

The School Development Planning Initiative was established in 1999. Its purpose is to promote school improvement and effectiveness through collaborative development planning. The supports that it provides for schools include in-service programmes, advisory and facilitation services, and resource materials, both in print and on the web. By the end of 2002, all post-primary schools had received the start-up grant-aid allocated to them through the Initiative to advance the process of planning. Arrangements for the next phase of the Initiative are being finalised. More information concerning the SDPI is available from <http://www.sdpi.ie>

### SCHOOL GUIDANCE REVIEW PILOT PROJECT (SGR), 1999-2000

The aim of the project was to assist schools to identify and plan a response to the changing guidance needs and competencies of students through the school's guidance programme. The project tested a review methodology and materials (see Appendix II) developed by an Advisory Committee of representatives of management and trade union bodies, the Institute of Guidance Counsellors and the Department of Education and Science. The School Guidance Review project was piloted in nine schools. The reported outcomes of the pilot included:

- A greater understanding of the whole school nature of guidance and the differential roles therein.
- Identification of deficiencies in current guidance provision in the pilot schools.
- A greater awareness by school management of the actual guidance needs of students.
- A greater appreciation and understanding of the work of the guidance counsellor.

A briefing document on the pilot project was circulated to all schools in May 2000. The experience of schools involved in the project and the usefulness of its methodology and materials have fed into the development of this publication.

More information concerning the SGR is available from <http://www.ncge.ie>

#### PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE GUIDANCE SERVICE IN POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS, 1998

This study highlighted the fact that most guidance programme planning in schools was informal and that such planning was not underpinned in any structured way by consultation. Recommendations arising from the study included that the process and content of a school guidance plan be defined in guidelines for schools. More information and a copy of the Report are available from NCGE.

#### THE AUDIT ON GUIDANCE IN POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS, 2000

An Audit of guidance provision in post-primary schools was conducted by NCGE at the request of the Department of Education and Science in 1999-2000. The following findings are relevant to this document:

- Only 14% of schools had a Whole School Development Plan in 1999-2000, of these 75% made reference to guidance.

- Of the 86% of schools that did not have a Whole School Development Plan, only 24% had a written school guidance programme.
- Schools not in the free education system were more likely to have either a Whole School Development Plan with reference to guidance or a written school guidance programme.

More information concerning the Audit on Guidance in Post-Primary schools is available from NCGE.

#### GUIDANCE ENHANCEMENT INITIATIVE (GEI), 2001-2004

In Spring 2001 the Minister for Education and Science announced 50 whole time equivalent posts for guidance under the Guidance Enhancement Initiative. The posts were allocated to schools that submitted innovative proposals concerning the enhancement of guidance for students in disadvantaged areas, promoting the uptake of science and developing links with local business and the community.

More information concerning the GEI is available from the DES website <http://www.education.ie>

#### MAKING A EUROPEAN AREA OF LIFELONG LEARNING A REALITY, 2001

The European Commission adopted the Communication on *Making A European Area of Lifelong Learning A Reality* in November 2001. The Communication outlines proposals for the realisation of Lifelong Learning throughout the EU. Information, guidance and counselling have a role in facilitating access to lifelong learning through the provision of guidance services.

More information on the Communication is available from [http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/education/lll\\_en.html](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/education/lll_en.html)

## Appendix II

# School Guidance Review

### SAMPLE INSTRUMENTS

All of the sample instruments below are available from the NCGE website <http://www.ncge.ie>

### HOW TO USE THE MATERIALS

The materials:

- Provide practical activities for use during management team/staff meetings or in-service sessions; and
- Can be used as they stand or edited and adapted to suit the needs of your own school, the way your management team is organised, or the way you prefer to work.

They follow the structure:

- Identification of guidance needs currently being met and the resources used to meet these needs;
- Identification of guidance needs that are not being met and the resources required to meet them;
- Develop a school guidance plan in response to identified needs and resources.

These activities can be undertaken for the whole school (all year groups), particular year groups, or particular classes within a year group.



## Activity 1

### BRIEFING SCHOOL STAFF ON THE REVIEW OF THE SCHOOL'S GUIDANCE PROGRAMME AND THE ELABORATION OF A PLAN FOR GUIDANCE.

**Purpose:** To engage the interest and support of school staff for reviewing how students' needs are being met by the school's guidance programme and for developing a plan to address unmet guidance needs.

**Time:** Class period.

**Task:** This activity consists of:

- Briefing school staff on:
  - (i) The Education Act (1998)
  - (ii) The Department of Education and Science's *Guidelines for Second Level Schools on the implications of Section 9 (c) of the Education Act (1998), relating to students' access to appropriate guidance*;
  - (iii) What guidance means in a school context;
  - (iv) The rationale for reviewing the schools' guidance programme;
  - (v) The anticipated outcomes of the review;
  - (vi) The benefits of the review for students, staff and school management.
- Allowing opportunity for questions, comments and observations on the rationale, outcomes and benefits;
- Suggesting scenarios of how the process of reviewing and developing a plan might take place;
- Achieving a consensus on whom the target group should be (class, year);
- Achieving consensus on how to proceed: who from the staff should be involved and how, the nature of the consultative process, the time-scale.

*Planning the School Guidance Programme* publication and the Department of Education and Science's *Guidelines for Second Level Schools on the implications of Section 9 (c) of the Education Act (1998), relating to students' access to appropriate guidance* should be consulted to help prepare this meeting. It may be helpful to have copies of these publications at the meeting for staff members who wish to consult it further.

## Activity 2

### IDENTIFYING GUIDANCE NEEDS THAT ARE BEING MET

**Purpose:** To gain a quick impression of what are the guidance needs of students (school, year group, class) and how these are being addressed.

**Time:** Class period.

**Task:** This activity consists of:

- Selecting a year group or group of students as a target for review;
- Recording the deliberations on the form provided on the next page;
- Discussion/reflection on this theme involving school management, the guidance counsellor and relevant staff.

You may need to refer to the Department of Education and Science's *Guidelines for Second Level Schools on the implications of Section 9 (c) of the Education Act (1998), relating to students' access to appropriate guidance* for an examination of guidance activities.

You may also wish to consider in this discussion relevant documentation from the school's curricular and other policies and Department of Education and Science publications.

From this activity, you may become aware of aspects of guidance which may be possible areas for development.

On the next page you will find a School Guidance Review: **Form A**, to guide the discussion and collate the information. This form may be photocopied or downloaded from the NCGE website ([www.ncge.ie](http://www.ncge.ie)).

**FORM A**

YEAR / CLASS GROUP: \_\_\_\_\_

**STUDENTS GUIDANCE NEEDS: EXISTING RESOURCES**

<b>STUDENT GUIDANCE NEEDS</b>	
<b>WHAT ARE THE GUIDANCE NEEDS OF THIS PARTICULAR GROUP?</b>	<b>WHAT ARE THE EXISTING RESOURCES* TO MEET THESE NEEDS?</b>
1. PERSONAL AND SOCIAL	
2. EDUCATIONAL	
3. CAREER	

\* STAFF, CURRICULAR PROGRAMMES, SUBJECTS, SCHOOL PROCEDURES, PARENT CONTACT, MATERIALS EQUIPMENT, HOURS/CLASS PERIODS PER WEEK, OTHER - please specify.

### Activity 3

#### WHAT RESOURCES DO WE HAVE FOR GUIDANCE.

**Purpose:** To identify and summarise the resources that the school uses for the school's guidance programme.

**Time:** Class period.

**Task:** This activity consists of:

This activity is aimed at making an inventory of all of the existing resources that a school uses for the school's guidance programme.

The process of undertaking this inventory involves a group discussion of the principal, guidance counsellor, and members of the school management team. The check-list provided on the next page, **Form B**, can be photocopied or downloaded from the NCGE website and circulated to members of the staff.

You may wish to refer to the publications referred to in Activity 2 for definitions of guidance.

### FORM B

#### GUIDANCE RESOURCES INVENTORY

<b>CHECKLIST OF EXISTING RESOURCES FOR YOUR SCHOOL'S GUIDANCE TEAM AND GUIDANCE RELATED ACTIVITIES</b>	
1. Does the school have a guidance counsellor/s? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Number: _____ Is the post(s) ex-quota <input type="checkbox"/> or in-quota <input type="checkbox"/> ?	<b>Guidance Enhancement Initiative Post</b> <input type="checkbox"/> No. of ex-quota hours _____ No. of hours subject teaching _____
2. What is the current Department of Education and Science weekly allocation of ex-quota guidance counsellor's hours to the school: Hours: 8 <input type="checkbox"/> 8.8 <input type="checkbox"/> 11 <input type="checkbox"/> 22 <input type="checkbox"/> 33 <input type="checkbox"/> 44 <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Learning Support Teacher</b> <input type="checkbox"/> No. of ex-quota hours: _____ No. of hours subject teaching: _____
3. How many hours per week of subject teaching does the school allocate to the guidance counsellor? Hours: 0 <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3-4 <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____	<b>Home-School-Community Liaison Co-ordinator</b> <input type="checkbox"/> No. of ex-quota hours: _____ No. of hours subject teaching: _____
4. Does the school have any of the following posts? If ex-quota, please specify the Department allocation and the number of hours subject teaching, the individual(s) teach(es)?	<b>Special Education/Resource Teacher</b> <input type="checkbox"/> No. of ex-quota hours: _____ No. of hours subject teaching: _____
	<b>Other personnel (please specify):</b> _____ No. of ex-quota hours: _____ No. of hours subject teaching: _____

5. Does the school provide time-tabled:  
Guidance Classes  Pastoral Care Classes  
 Access by the guidance counsellor to other classes by negotiation and agreement  Meetings of staff, the guidance counsellor and the school management team  Meetings of the Pastoral Care team   
Other (*please specify*):  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. How many hours per week does the school allocate for:  
**(a)** individual counselling with students by the guidance counsellor   
No. of hours: \_\_\_\_\_  
**(b)** guidance classes by the guidance counsellor   
No. of hours: \_\_\_\_\_  
**(c)** Pastoral Care individual consultation with students   
No. of hours: \_\_\_\_\_  
**(d)** consultation with parents   
No. of hours: \_\_\_\_\_  
Overall no. of hours: \_\_\_\_\_
7. What pastoral care personnel, if any, does the school have? (Please tick as many as appropriate):  
Form Teacher  Year Head  Pastoral Care Co-ordinator  Chaplain  Home-School-Community Liaison  Others (*please specify*):  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Which of the following Department of Education and Science programmes does the school provide?  
Transition Year  LCA  LCVP  JCSP  SPHE  PLC  VTOS   
Others (*please specify*):  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. For which of the following Department of Education and Science programmes have staff members received training?  
Transition Year  LCA  LCVP  JCSP  SPHE  PLC  VTOS   
Others (*please specify*):  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Which of the following referral and community support services are available to the school?  
Child Guidance Clinic   
NEPS Psychologist  Medical Personnel   
Health Board Psychologist   
Social Worker   
Juvenile Liaison Officer   
Youth Worker   
Educational Welfare Officers   
Other (*please specify*):  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. Does the school have designated and suitably equipped rooms for guidance? (give details):  
Office  Group work classroom   
Computer room  Library   
Other (*please specify*):  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. What equipment does the school have for guidance?  
Telephone  Computer  Modem and Internet access  Shelving  Filing Cabinet  Photocopier   
Other (*please specify*):  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. Do the guidance counsellor and other support staff have access to: Secretarial support  Photocopier  Fax  Scanner  Printer   
Other (*please specify*):  
\_\_\_\_\_
14. What guidance materials are available in the school?  
Reference library of materials   
Software  Relevant classroom texts owned by school  NCGE materials   
Audio and visual   
Psychometric tests   
Borrowing facility for materials   
Student owned text books   
Other (*please specify*):  
\_\_\_\_\_
15. What financial provision does the school make annually for the school's guidance programme?  
<100  100-250  250+  500+   
1,000+   
Other (*please specify*):  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Activity 4

### IDENTIFYING GUIDANCE NEEDS THAT ARE NOT BEING MET

**Purpose:** To summarise the guidance needs of students that are not currently being met by the school's guidance programme.

**Time:** Class period.

**Task:** This activity consists of:

- Selecting a year group or group of students as a target for review;
- Group discussion/reflection on this theme involving school management, the guidance counsellor and relevant staff;
- Recording the deliberations on the form provided on the next page.

You may also wish to consider in this discussion relevant documentation from the school's curricular and other policies, and Department of Education and Science publications.

From this activity, you may become aware of aspects of guidance which may become possible areas for development and the resources required to meet these unmet needs.

On the next page you will find the Guidance Review **Form C** to guide discussion and collate information. The form can be photocopied or downloaded from the NCGE website and circulated to the staff.

**FORM C**

YEAR / CLASS GROUP: \_\_\_\_\_

**STUDENTS GUIDANCE NEEDS: RESOURCES REQUIRED**

<b>STUDENT GUIDANCE NEEDS</b>	
<b>WHICH GUIDANCE NEEDS OF THIS PARTICULAR GROUP ARE NOT BEING MET?</b>	<b>WHAT RESOURCES AND/OR PROCEDURES* ARE REQUIRED TO MEET THOSE NEEDS?</b>
1. PERSONAL AND SOCIAL	
2. EDUCATIONAL	
3. CAREER	

\* STAFF, CURRICULAR PROGRAMMES, SCHOOL PROCEDURES, PARENT CONTACT, MATERIALS EQUIPMENT, HOURS/CLASS PERIODS PER WEEK, OTHER - please specify.

## Activity 5

### SUMMARY OF THE SCHOOL'S RESOURCES AND/OR PROCEDURES TO ADDRESS THE GUIDANCE NEEDS OF STUDENTS

**Purpose:** To sum up the evidence you have found through activities 2, 3 and 4 so that you can plan how to address the unmet guidance needs.

**Time:** Class period.

**Task:** This activity consists of:

- Selecting a year or class group for whom discussions have already taken place using Activities 2, 3 & 4 and the deliberations recorded;
- Collating the information obtained through group discussion / reflection on these deliberations, integrating the various activity results. This should be undertaken by school management, the guidance counsellor and relevant staff.
- Recording the outcomes of the discussion on the Guidance Review **Form D1** and **Form D2** on the next two pages. **Form D1** is helpful for summarising which guidance needs of students are being met and the resources used to meet these needs. **Form D2** is intended for summarising the guidance needs of students that are not being met and the resources needed to address these needs.

This activity will enable you to have an overview of how student guidance needs are being met, the school's existing resources for the school guidance programme, the student guidance needs to be addressed and resources required to meet them. **Forms D1 and D2** should be photocopied or downloaded from the NCGE website and circulated to members of the staff.



**FORM D1**

YEAR / CLASS GROUP: \_\_\_\_\_

**SUMMARY RESULTS FROM REVIEW (FORM A)**

<b>SUMMARISING THE RESULTS OF THE GUIDANCE REVIEW</b>						
WHAT ARE THE EXISTING RESOURCES FOR THE SCHOOL'S GUIDANCE PROGRAMME?						
Guidance Area	Personnel	Training	Curriculum	Facilities	Materials	Other <i>(please specify)</i>
PERSONAL AND SOCIAL						
EDUCATIONAL						
CAREER						

**FORM D2**

YEAR / CLASS GROUP: \_\_\_\_\_

**SUMMARY RESULTS FROM REVIEW (FORM B)**

<b>SUMMARISING THE RESULTS OF THE GUIDANCE REVIEW</b>						
WHAT RESOURCE / PROCEDURES ARE REQUIRED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE SCHOOL'S						
Guidance Area	Personnel	Training	Curriculum	Facilities	Materials	Other <i>(please specify)</i>
PERSONAL AND SOCIAL						
EDUCATIONAL						
CAREER						

## Activity 6

### CHECKING IT OUT

**Purpose:** To obtain views of other staff and other interested parties e.g. school Board of Management or other appropriate body, on the summary developed in Activity 5.

**Time:** Class period.

**Task:** This task involves:

- Presentation of the summary developed in Activity 5 and the process by which it was achieved to other school staff and other interested parties in the school through the appropriate consultative process;
- Seeking the comments of these parties on the summary through discussions and/or in writing as appropriate;
- Incorporating these comments into the summary where relevant / appropriate.

The undertaking of this task should be delegated to a member of the review group, preferably the school principal or guidance counsellor.

The outcomes of this task include the refinement of the summary developed in Activity 5 and the gaining of wider school support for the School Development Plan.

## Activity 7

### DEVELOPING A PLAN TO IMPROVE GUIDANCE PROVISION

**Purpose:** To use the results of the previous exercises to develop a plan for improving guidance provision.

**Time:** Class period.

**Task:** This activity is based on the summary developed through Activities 5 & 6:

- The prioritising of the needs of the school's guidance programme into immediate, short-term and long term objectives;
- Setting dates for the achievement of these objectives;
- Identifying and describing the financial costs of achieving each objective;
- Identifying the method (internal/external support) required to achieve the objectives.

The activity is best undertaken by the principal, guidance counsellor and school management team. **Form E** on the next page should be photocopied or downloaded from the NCGE website and circulated to staff members to guide the discussion.

The outcomes of this exercise may include making better use of existing resources in the school.

The school guidance plan then becomes part of the School Development Plan.

**FORM E**

YEAR / CLASS GROUP: \_\_\_\_\_

**DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR IMPROVING  
THE SCHOOL'S GUIDANCE PROGRAMME**

<b>SUMMARISING THE RESULTS OF THE GUIDANCE REVIEW</b>			
WHAT ARE THE EXISTING RESOURCES FOR THE SCHOOL'S GUIDANCE PROGRAMME?			
	Immediate Objectives <i>(Specify date)</i>	Short Term Objectives <i>(Specify date)</i>	Long Term Objectives <i>(Specify date)</i>
PERSONAL			
COSTING			
METHODS OF ACHIEVEMENT			
TRAINING			
COSTING			
METHODS OF ACHIEVEMENT			
CURRICULUM PROVISIONS			
COSTING			
METHODS OF ACHIEVEMENT			
FACILITIES			
COSTING			
METHODS OF ACHIEVEMENT			
MATERIALS			
COSTING			
METHODS OF ACHIEVEMENT			
OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)			
COSTING			
METHODS OF ACHIEVEMENT			

## Appendix III

### Action Plan - Guidance Programme

Priority:

Target:

Tasks	Who	How	When	Resources	Success Criteria Implementation

Success Criteria – Outcomes: Impact on Learning and Teaching:

Monitoring Procedures:

Evaluation Procedures:

## Appendix IV

# Allocation from the Department of Education and Science to second level schools for guidance

ALLOCATION OF HOURS FOR THE PROVISION OF GUIDANCE IN SCHOOLS

### SCHEDULE A: SCHOOLS IN THE FREE EDUCATION SCHEME

Enrolment	Allocation
1000 or more	44 hours/week
800-999	33 hours/week
500-799	22 hours/week
250-499	11 hours/week
200-249	8.8 hours/week
<200	8 hours/week

### SCHEDULE B: SCHOOLS NOT IN THE FREE EDUCATION SCHEME

Enrolment	Allocation
500 students or more	22 hours/week
350-499	11 hours/week

