

SCHOOL GUIDANCE REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

BACKGROUND PAPER

This background paper outlines the rationale for and the processes of reviewing a school's guidance programme and of developing a plan to address the unmet guidance needs of pupils. It is to be read in conjunction with *Guidance and Counselling in Post-Primary Schools*, a publication developed to assist the processes of reviewing and planning.

1. INTRODUCTION

The *Guidelines for the Practice of Guidance and Counselling in Schools* (Dept. of Education, 1996) defines guidance and counselling as the "full range of interventions or activities which assist pupils to make choices about their lives". "For second level pupils, these choices are focused in a developmental way on three key areas:

- ↪ personal and social;
- ↪ educational;
- ↪ career".

In this paper the term 'guidance' denotes such a range of interventions and activities and is synonymous with the terms 'guidance counselling' and 'guidance and counselling'.

The school guidance review and development plan instrument, **Guidance and Counselling in Post-Primary Schools (1999)**, has been developed by a group representing JMB, IVEA, ACS, ASTI, TUI, IGC, Association of Education Centres, NCGE, and the Department of Education and Science (Psychological Service and ICDU).

The Guidelines for the Practice of Guidance and Counselling in Schools (1996) highlighted the need for schools to review, in partnership with all concerned, how the guidance needs of pupils are being met and to develop a programme and plan to meet the particular needs of the schools and its curriculum. The Guidelines noted (i) the role of the school management, the guidance counsellor, and other school staff in drawing up the programme and reviewing its operation, and (ii) the various roles in guidance of these and other partners. **Guidance and Counselling in Post-Primary Schools (1999)** is designed to assist in this process.

The instrument is not an evaluation of the guidance counsellor's work. The focuses of the instrument and process are pupils' guidance needs and the schools' response to these.

2. AIMS

This instrument has two purposes. Firstly, it aims to assist school management and staff in identifying (i) the career, educational, personal/social guidance needs of pupils, (ii) the programmes, services, and resources in the school that are currently meeting these needs, and (iii) guidance needs that are not currently being met by the school. Secondly, the instrument is designed to assist in the development of a plan to meet the unmet guidance needs.

3. DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of both review and planning, the following definitions may be helpful:

Personal and social guidance: services, such as counselling, and activities, such as class/group work, to promote interpersonal communication skills, decision making, self-awareness, and the ability to plan.

Educational guidance: services, such as counselling, and activities, such as class/group work, to assist decision making related to course, subject and level in post-primary school; motivation and learning; study skills and examination technique.

Career guidance: services, such as counselling, and activities, such as class/group work, to assist decision making related to choices of education and training courses; employment opportunities; job search skills; work and other life roles.

An indicative list of competencies that post-primary school pupils need to develop in order to make good life choices - career, educational, personal/social - is provided in Appendix One for reference purposes.

4. REVIEW PROCESS

The emphasis of the school guidance review and development plan is on reviewing and developing the school guidance programme which has been established to meet the guidance needs of the pupils.

As all school staff in their respective roles have a duty of care towards pupils, it is envisaged that all staff will have the opportunity to contribute to this review. There are different ways in which this can be achieved. Here are some examples:

Example One: The school principal and guidance counsellor meet in advance to plan the review. A staff meeting is held where staff are divided into working groups. Each group could include a year head and other relevant staff. Work groups might focus on the guidance needs of a particular year or class group or focus on the guidance needs across the year groups. Procedures for chairing the work groups and reporting back to plenary sessions would be useful.

Example Two: A core staff group - e.g. guidance counsellor, year heads/pastoral care team - meets in advance to draft a response to the review and development plan instrument. This draft is subsequently presented to staff and school management for additional comment.

Example Three: The school principal and guidance counsellor meet in advance and draft a response to the review and development plan instrument. This draft is subsequently presented to staff and other school management for additional comment.

The publication *Guidance and Counselling in Post-primary Schools*, which accompanies this paper provides a range of activities and materials to support whichever method you choose.

5. OUTCOMES OF THE REVIEW

The following are the anticipated outcomes of a review of the school's guidance programme:

1. Identification of what is being provided across the curriculum to support guidance needs of students.
2. The creation of mutual awareness and respect for the complementary roles that all school staff play in delivering a school's guidance programme.
3. Developing awareness of and making explicit the changes that are taking place in the curriculum.
4. Acknowledgement / affirmation of the positive aspects of the school's guidance programme.
5. Raising awareness of the limitations of the existing guidance programme.
6. Raising awareness of the need for additional resources including staff training.
7. Better coordination of existing resources and how best to utilise them.
8. Creating an awareness of certain groups whose guidance needs are not being met.
9. Making staff aware of the guidance needs of students.

The review process should clarify which guidance needs of which groups of pupils are being met and which are not. The result of the review should lead to a set of proposals as to how the unmet needs can be addressed - in effect a school guidance development plan. The results of the review and the development plan would be submitted to the Board of Management or other appropriate body for its consideration and subsequent adoption.

6. BENEFITS OF THE SCHOOL GUIDANCE REVIEW

6.1 TO THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

- ❑ Gives a clearer view of what is happening in terms of guidance in the school;
- ❑ Provides a framework and structure for development of guidance provision in school;
- ❑ Raises awareness of what the guidance counsellor is achieving;
- ❑ Synthesises what is happening – so that policy is clear;
- ❑ Gives principals' organisations guidelines to address guidance issues in school;
- ❑ Allows affirmation of what is going on.

6.2 BENEFITS TO GUIDANCE COUNSELLOR

- ❑ Enables guidance counsellor to be at the centre of a guidance planning process;
- ❑ Enables guidance counsellor to have assistance from school management and other staff to enable them to do their work;
- ❑ Enables guidance counsellor to tap into other school resources through networking ;
- ❑ It makes clear to the school the totality of guidance provision and the key role of the guidance counsellor within it;
- ❑ It enables the guidance counsellor to incorporate the range of guidance activities into a whole school plan;
- ❑ It enables the guidance counsellor to assess the extent of his/her contribution to the guidance programme and affirm it.

6.3 BENEFITS TO SCHOOL STAFF

- ❑ Develops teamwork and co-operation;
- ❑ Raises awareness of what guidance is about;
- ❑ Affirms contribution of staff to guidance programme.
- ❑ Enables the staff to value their own contribution to the guidance programme through their own subject area and responsibilities, and to the personal and social development of pupils;
- ❑ Puts into focus the central purpose of the school.

6.4 BENEFITS TO PUPILS

- ❑ Focus on actual needs – those met and unmet;
- ❑ Provides an integrated approach towards responding to these needs;
- ❑ Adds a positive effect on the school ethos.

6.5 BENEFITS TO SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

- ❑ Makes for a more efficient school in terms of use of existing resources
- ❑ Provides clarity of vision on existing resources and needs;
- ❑ Provides an opportunity for school management to make interventions where needs exist and resources are available;
- ❑ Provides school management with an opportunity to seek resources to meet unmet needs;
- ❑ Provides criteria to assess how the guidance needs of pupils are being met;
- ❑ Gives a context into which offers of external assistance can be considered;
- ❑ The benefits are presented in summary form in Appendix 2.

7. PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

The Development Plan could be structured according to immediate, short-term and long-term goals. The Plan can be used to make a case for extra resources and/or to make better use of existing resources. The allocation of additional resources rests largely on factors or bodies outside of the schools.

A model for a Development Plan would include:

1. A review of existing school plans, if any.
2. Development of a curricular sub-plan – what can be delivered through the curriculum.
3. Development of a services sub-plan – provision of guidance / counselling, pastoral care system.
4. Staff development sub-plan – implications for staff training, recruitment, and allocation.
5. Financial sub-plan – costing and sourcing of materials, resources, training etc.
6. Marketing sub-plan – internal and external support required to meet the agreed objectives.
6. Identification of immediate, short-term, and long-term objectives across the sub-plans.

REFERENCE

Department of Education and Science. ***Guidelines for the Practice of Guidance and Counselling in Schools. (1996)*** Dublin: National Centre for Guidance in Education
Guidance and Counselling in Post- Primary Schools (1999)

APPENDIX I

An indicative list of competencies that post-primary school pupils need to develop in order to make good life choices i.e. career, educational and personal/social.

1. SELF-KNOWLEDGE

- ⇒ Understanding the influence of a positive self-concept.
- ⇒ Skills to interact positively with others.
- ⇒ Understanding human growth and development.

2. EDUCATIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL EXPLORATION

- ⇒ Understanding the relationship between educational achievement and career opportunities.
- ⇒ Understanding the need for positive attitudes to work and learning.
- ⇒ Skills to locate, evaluate and interpret career information.
- ⇒ Skills to prepare to seek, obtain, maintain and change jobs.
- ⇒ Understanding how the needs of society and how the economy influences the nature and structure of work.

3. OTHER LIFE SKILLS

- ⇒ Skills to make decisions.
- ⇒ Understanding the interrelationship of life roles.
- ⇒ Understanding the continuous changes in male and female roles.
- ⇒ Skills in career planning.

APPENDIX II

GUIDANCE REVIEW

WHY SHOULD A SCHOOL GET INVOLVED IN THE REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT OF A GUIDANCE PROGRAMME?

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- Raises awareness of what the guidance counsellor is achieving;
- Synthesises what is happening – so that school policy is clear;
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SCHOOL STAFF

- Develops teamwork and co-operation;
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- Affirms contribution of staff to guidance programme.
- Enables the staff to value their own contribution to the guidance programme through their own subject area and responsibilities, and to the personal and social development of pupils;
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SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

- Makes for a more efficient school in terms of use of existing resources ;
- Provides clarity of vision on existing resources and needs;
- Provides an opportunity for school management to make interventions where needs exist and resources are available;
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- Provides criteria to assess how the guidance needs of pupils are being met ;
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PUPILS

- Focus on actual needs – those met and unmet;
- Provides an integrated approach towards responding to these needs;
- Adds a positive effect to school ethos.