

## Whole School Guidance Planning Section 1 – Exploring Whole School Guidance in our School

Welcome to Section 1 of Whole School Guidance Planning. This Section will support your preparation for the reflection activities and exercises that will follow in subsequent sections. This will facilitate your exploration of whole school guidance. You will, as a school, need to decide early on what the focus of your exploration of whole school guidance will be i.e. junior or senior cycle. To explore the provision and practice of whole school guidance in both junior and senior cycles will be a considerable undertaking and one that NCGE does not recommend. This, and subsequent sections, will include links to resources/tools that can be used in respect of Junior Cycle/or Senior Cycle.

### Learning Outcomes

At the end of Section One you will have:

- Reflected on the policy guidelines and how they may inform the development of your whole school guidance programme.
- Identified the contributions that members of the whole school community can make to the whole school guidance programme.
- Explored a Continuum of Support model for whole school guidance.

### Introduction

This Section explores the whole school guidance programme offered to students in your school. You will be invited to consult a number of documents/publications throughout the Section in order to learn more about your school guidance programme and the guidance provision offered to students.

You will also explore the role that all in the school community (school management and staff, parents and students) have to play in the provision of guidance in the school. It is often the case that not all members of the school community fully appreciate the contribution that they can make to the school guidance programme, for instance, in the case of subject teachers – providing support relating to subject choices, study skills and on taking exams. This Section will facilitate you in identifying the contributions that all members of the school community can make in the provision of whole school guidance to students.

As there are a number of reflection activities included within the content you may find it helpful to keep a record of your insights and learning throughout this Section in the workbook provided as a resource. It is preferable that the reflection activities form part of a discussion of guidance in your school so that a range of perspectives are captured. We have provided this workbook to facilitate your reflections. Before we proceed, it may be helpful to revisit some definitions relating to guidance in schools.

## Definitions

### The School Guidance Programme:

The school guidance programme is defined in the NCGE publication *Planning the School Guidance Programme (2004)* as “the specific set of learning experiences which a school provides in response to the guidance needs of its students” (pg. 8).

A more detailed definition is provided by the Department in its 2005 publication:

Guidance in schools “refers to a range of learning experiences provided in a developmental sequence, that assist students to develop self-management skills which will lead to effective choices and decisions about their lives. It encompasses the three separate, but interlinked, areas of personal and social development, educational guidance and career guidance”. (Department of Education and Science; 2005, pg. 4). Counselling: The DES Guidelines also define Counselling offered within a guidance context as follows: “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 has as its objective the empowerment of students so that they can make decisions, solve problems, address behavioural issues, develop coping strategies and resolve difficulties they may be experiencing. Counselling in schools may include personal counselling, educational counselling, career counselling or combinations of these”. (Department of Education and Science, 2005; pg. 4).

**Reflection One:** Take some time to consider how these definitions have informed the provision and practice of guidance in your school. In relation to the counselling aspect of guidance, are there particular challenges associated with this role i.e. how have the boundaries, nature and scope of counselling been decided – short-term versus long-term counselling, counselling versus psychotherapy, caseload management etc.? Do consider ‘career counselling’ also when responding.

### Needs of all students

The DES in its 2005 publication also highlights that the needs of all students should be reflected in the School Guidance Plan and that there be a “balance between the personal, social, educational and career guidance offered to students...” and “reflect the needs of both junior cycle and senior cycle students” (Department of Education and Science, 2005: pg. 4)

This publication can be accessed via <https://www.ncge.ie/guidance-post-primary>.

**Reflection Two:** Take some time to reflect on the definitions presented above. Does your current school guidance programme offer a balance between the personal, social, educational and career guidance offered to students? If yes, how have you achieved this, has this been a challenge? If no, think about the reasons for this and how it may be possible to achieve a greater balance. Does your current programme reflect the needs of both junior cycle and senior cycle students? How were the needs of students identified? Are there any needs that are not being met at present?

## Exploring the School Guidance Programme

Guidance is a whole school activity with the guidance counsellor, as a specialist, having a key role to play in leading and coordinating the delivery of the school guidance programme in consultation with members of school management and staff (DES, 2016). Now that you have had some time to revisit the definitions relating to guidance above and have considered the provision of guidance we will start taking a look at your school guidance programme. A useful place to start is to review the activities relating to guidance set out in the Department of Education and Skills' *Programme Recognition Framework: Guidance Counselling* (2016). The Framework can be accessed below.

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/dce0a0-programme-recognition-framework-guidance-counselling/>

**Activity:** Take some time to reflect on the guidance activities listed in the Programme Recognition Framework and take some time to complete the Table resource 'Review Provision of School Guidance Activities'.

### Reflection Three:

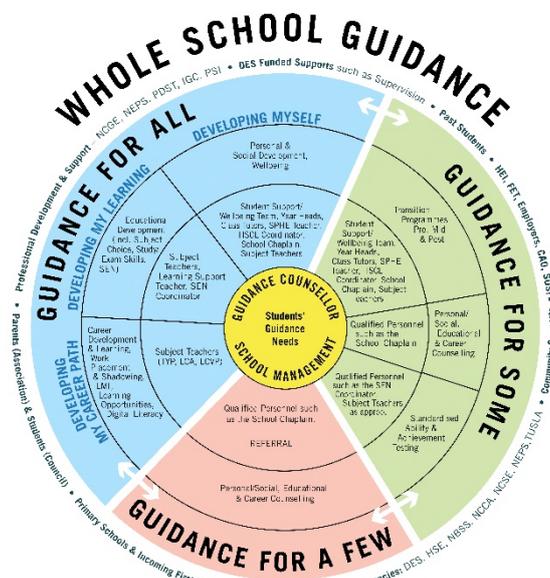
- How did you find completing the Table?
- What were your findings and what did you learn?

## Roles in the School Guidance Programme

Following on from the activity we will now turn to exploring roles and contributions members of the whole school community can make to the school guidance programme. You will have begun to consider roles in the last exercise. A useful place to start in exploring roles further is the publication *Planning the School Guidance Programme* Chapter 4. This Chapter outlines the roles of management, staff and the education partners in the school guidance programme.

<https://www.ncge.ie/school-guidance-handbook/planning-school-guidance-programme>

Now take some time to consider the Whole School Guidance Wheel diagram on page 14 of the *NCGE: A Whole School Guidance Framework* (NCGE, 2017).



Now address the reflections below.

### Reflection Four

- Take some time to think about how Chapter 4 and the Whole School Guidance Wheel apply in your school and context.
- Do you think that members of the school community are aware of the contribution they make to the school guidance programme?
- Looking at the Wheel and your response to the Table resource, are there staff members listed that you did not include in your response? If so, how could these staff members be involved and what knowledge/skills do they bring to the activities of the school guidance programme?

You may find the blank template of this diagram, available [HERE](#), useful.

## Continuum of Support Model for Whole School Guidance

Now that you have considered the main guidance activities that are part of your school guidance programme and the roles that members of the school community have to play in the process, continue your work by reading more on the continuum of support model for guidance on pages 12-14 of the *NCGE: A Whole School Guidance Framework* (NCGE, 2017). You may already be employing this model in areas relating to guidance as a result of guidelines produced by NEPS on wellbeing and learning support. (*Wellbeing in Post-primary Schools* [https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Education-Reports/Well\\_Being\\_PP\\_Schools\\_Guidelines.pdf](https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Education-Reports/Well_Being_PP_Schools_Guidelines.pdf) and *Special Educational Needs: A Continuum of Support - Guidelines for Teachers* [https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/neps\\_special\\_needs\\_guidelines.pdf](https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/neps_special_needs_guidelines.pdf)). However, this model may not yet be applied to career guidance in your school.

**Reflection 5:** Take some time to consider the following questions:

- What are your initial thoughts on the continuum of support model for guidance?
- Is this something you are already doing, if so, how is it working and can it be refined in any way (based on your reflections of the work you have undertaken above)?
- If this model isn't in place in your school consider how it may work?

**Activity:** In your own time continue reading the Framework from pages 14-22. Consider undertaking a SCOT Analysis (strengths, challenges, opportunities and threats) of implementing this model in your school.

**Reflection 6:** Reflect on what you have read. Is your school delivering content related to the three areas of learning? If yes, consider how they may relate to the Framework for Junior Cycle Statements of Learning (SoL) (NCCA poster [www.ncca.ie/media/1145/juniorcycle\\_statements\\_of\\_learningposter\\_dec11.pdf](http://www.ncca.ie/media/1145/juniorcycle_statements_of_learningposter_dec11.pdf)); Key Skills [www.ncca.ie/media/2115/key\\_skills\\_2014.pdf](http://www.ncca.ie/media/2115/key_skills_2014.pdf) and Junior Cycle Wellbeing Indicators [www.ncca.ie/media/3559/wellbeing-indicators-posters.pdf](http://www.ncca.ie/media/3559/wellbeing-indicators-posters.pdf)

Are there areas not included in your school guidance programme, if so, how might these be accommodated? You are now thinking about whole school guidance. How you understand whole school guidance will influence the provision of guidance in your school.