



## Information Note 0009/2023

### To: The Managerial Authorities of Recognised Post-Primary Schools

### Information Note for Principals, Guidance Counsellors and Guidance Teams in relation to Whole School Guidance Provision at Junior Cycle

#### 1. Introduction

This Information Note is to provide post-primary schools with the requisite information and support regarding the provision of Whole School Guidance to Junior Cycle students. This Information Note is directed to school management and has particular relevance for guidance counsellors and guidance teams. This Information Note is proper to [Circular 0028/2023](#).

#### 2. Purpose of Information Note

This Information Note is created to support schools in the delivery of appropriate Guidance ([The Education Act, 1998 9c](#)) regarding the Junior Cycle programme. The Junior Cycle programme **must** include guidance related learning, in line with [Circular 0028/2023](#).

Classroom guidance related learning for Junior Cycle students is the focus of this document, as noted in point 3 (iii) below. However, it is noted that effective Guidance involves a range of activities provided in a developmental sequence throughout post-primary education (DES, 2005).

#### 3. A definition of Guidance:

Guidance “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).

At Junior Cycle level, three types of guidance activities are generally undertaken:

- (i) Whole school / year group activities. For example, schools may organise a first-year induction programme to support transition from primary school.



- (ii) One-to-one guidance counselling, including educational guidance, career guidance and social/personal guidance and;
- (iii) Classroom guidance related learning. As noted in point 2, this document refers to this learning in particular. Classroom guidance related learning can be provided by the guidance counsellor or another teacher in accordance with Whole School Guidance planning. Classroom guidance related learning is different to guidance counselling, which is the remit of the guidance counsellor only.

#### 4. Timetabling for guidance related learning

There are two means by which classroom guidance related learning may be included on a school timetable at Junior Cycle:

- (i) Wellbeing hours: schools are reminded that from September 2022, for incoming first-year students, there is a requirement to provide a minimum of 400 hours of Wellbeing across the three years of Junior Cycle. Of these 400 hours, 335 hours are required for the provision of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE) and Physical Education (PE) across the three years of Junior Cycle. The balance of 65 hours may be accorded to other wellbeing-related content, including guidance related learning. (Note: schools can include other areas in their provision for wellbeing, as detailed in section 2.6 of [Circular 0028/2023](#)) and;
- (ii) Other areas of learning: classroom guidance related learning may also be provided to students outside of the provision of Wellbeing.

#### 5. Resources to support classroom guidance related learning

Multiple resources are available to support classroom guidance related learning. For example:

- [Oide Guidance Team](#) are providing full-day professional learning seminars on designing the Junior Cycle Guidance Programme in the 2023/24 academic year. Oide professional learning leaders are also available to support schools in Guidance through school support.
- Units of learning for each of the three years of Junior Cycle have been developed for guidance related learning. Each unit of learning has seven individual lessons. These guidance related learning units are available on [www.scoilnet.ie](http://www.scoilnet.ie).
- Schools may develop their own guidance related learning units and plan for them using Appendix I of the Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines.



## 6. School-developed units of learning: sample learning outcomes for Junior Cycle guidance

Learning outcomes for Guidance will vary in accordance with each school's local context and the backgrounds, interests and abilities of its students and to reflect the characteristic spirit of the school. It is important that guidance counsellors engage with the school's [Student Support Team](#) to facilitate planning for the bespoke needs of the students at all levels of the [continuum of support](#). However, the following are provided as learning outcomes that may be identified in the process of guidance planning at Junior Cycle:

- Students will be able to identify a range of post-school pathways;
- Students will be able to describe different work roles and conditions;
- Students will be able to examine and describe 'who they are', their identity, their interests, their values and their mind-set to gain a greater understanding of themselves;
- Students will be able to identify some of their personal goals and explore how to achieve them;
- Students will be able to reflect on their interests and values and describe how they fit with their educational goals;
- Students will be able to review school, family, peer and work activities and how these may impact on one's career choice;
- Students will be able to analyse the knowledge and career management skills one is acquiring from taking specific subjects and extra-curricular activities and;
- Students will be able to reflect on the important aspects of their own lives and develop skills for managing a well-balanced life amid competing demands and individual goals.

The [NCCA Learning Outcomes Publication](#) provides additional information on how schools can develop their own learning outcomes for Guidance. Schools can also access information about developing 'Appendix I' in [NCCA Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines \(2021\)](#).

## 7. Further information:

- Currently, there is no maximum or minimum allocation of hours for Guidance provision at Junior Cycle:
- In planning for Guidance at Junior Cycle, schools must not 'double count' hours provided for learning that takes place in other curricular areas. For example, SPHE has its own subject specification for Junior Cycle. Therefore, if a guidance related class is being taught, it cannot also be counted as a SPHE lesson and vice-versa; Collaboration with the SPHE team/co-co-ordinator will be necessary to avoid unhelpful duplication in social and personal guidance and;
- Where a Student Support Team exists it should form the hub for all the support structures in the school, which includes those responsible in the school for planning the Junior Cycle wellbeing programme. A guidance counsellor should be a core member of a student support team in schools. More information on how school-



teams fit together is available in the [NCCA Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines \(2021\)](#)

Additional policy information (including circulars, publications and resources) related to guidance are available [here](#).

**Guidance Unit  
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