



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Whole School Guidance Policy in our Contemporary Post-Primary Schools

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Guidance Unit, CAP

AMCSS/JMB 38th Annual Conference

A hand holding a magnifying glass over a forest path, symbolizing focus and discovery. The background is a blurred forest scene with green trees and a dirt path. The magnifying glass is held in the foreground, focusing on a small section of the path.

Our Schools' Mission in a Digital Era: Embracing Change and Upholding Values

This **interactive workshop** will focus on whole-school guidance provision in post-primary schools, from a Department of Education (DE) policy perspective. **Guidance policy has**

evolved at a gallop in recent years as the (new) Guidance Unit was established in 2022. In particular, a number of exciting and positive changes have occurred within post-primary guidance following the publication of the **National Strategic**

Framework for Lifelong Guidance (2023-2030). The **DE Guidance Unit is led by**
a guidance specialist who is a qualified guidance counsellor, with many years of experience working in the role in the post primary sector. This workshop will highlight some of the important changes and developments **in contemporary guidance provision**

in the post-primary sector, which involves a model of whole school guidance (WSG) within which the guidance counsellor undertakes a pivotal and specialised role. Key policy documents that support WSG will be showcased during this workshop and discussed with a view to

strengthening WSG (including the role of the guidance counsellor) in post primary schools. In addition, exciting plans for the evolution of

guidance-policy over the next twelve months will be outlined in the context of **the national**

consultation on post-primary guidance, which launched in February and closed on 9th April 2025.



Workshop Aims



Focus on guidance policy

- Updates on recent developments
- Outline of 'where next'



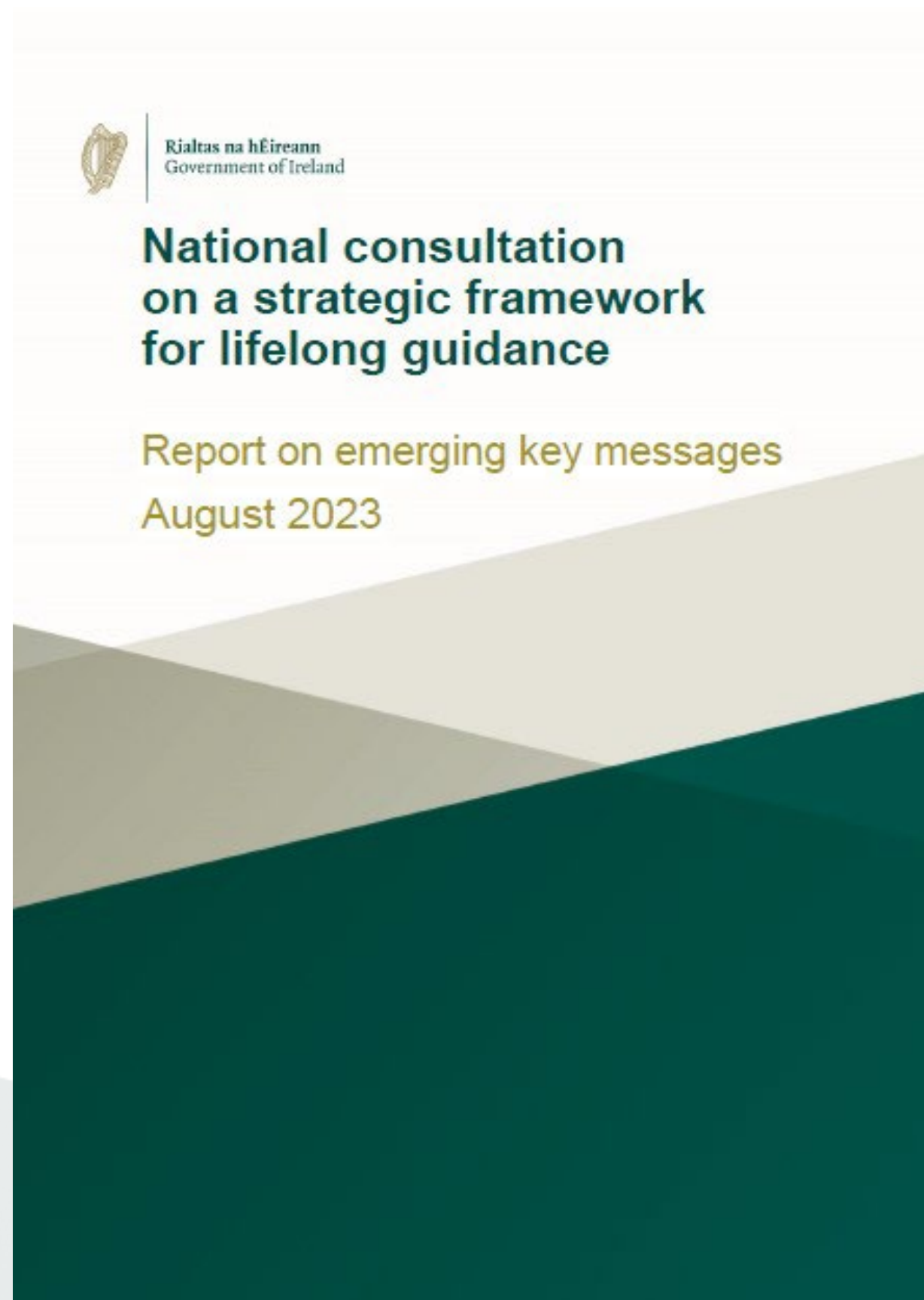


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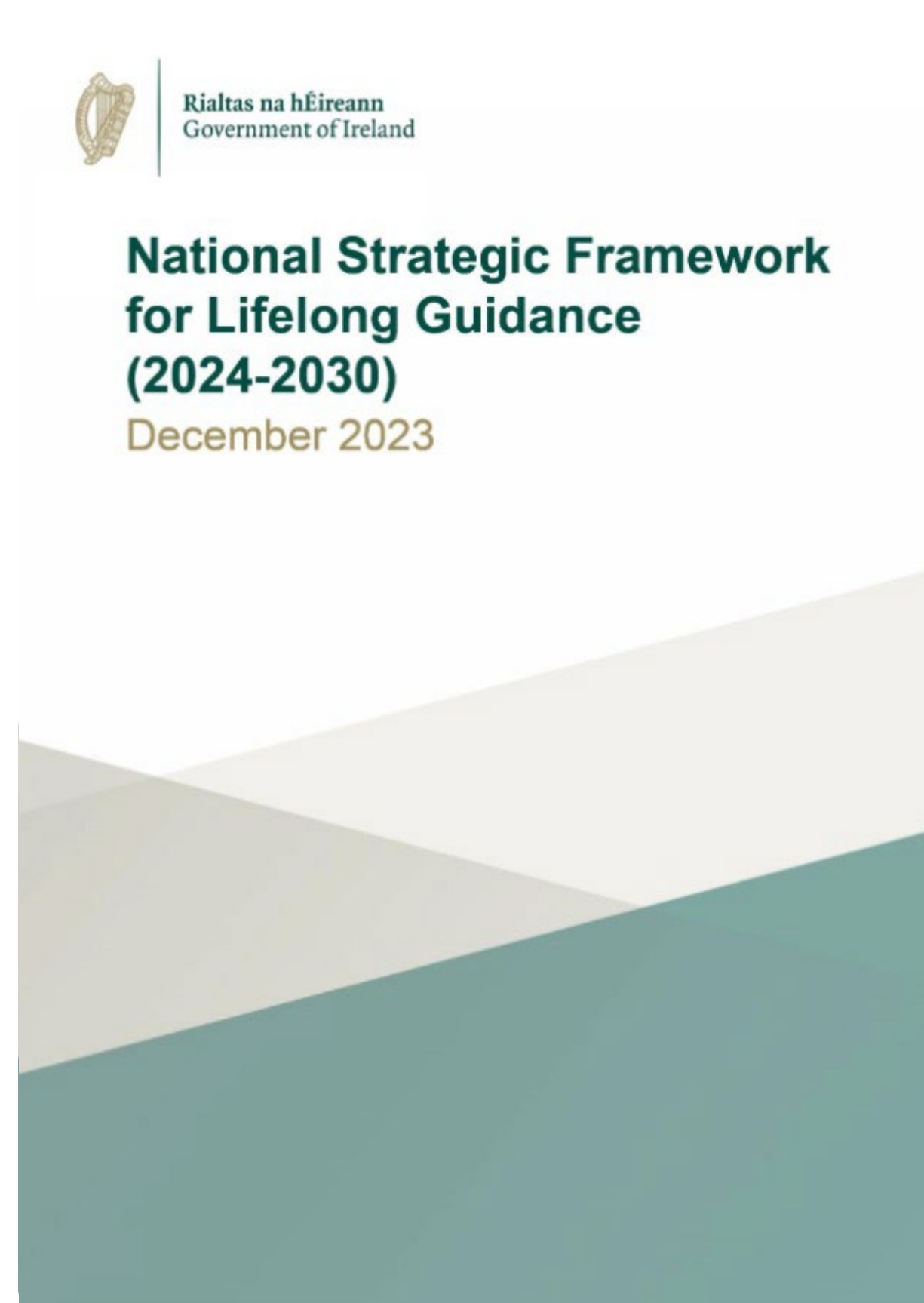
Strategic Context



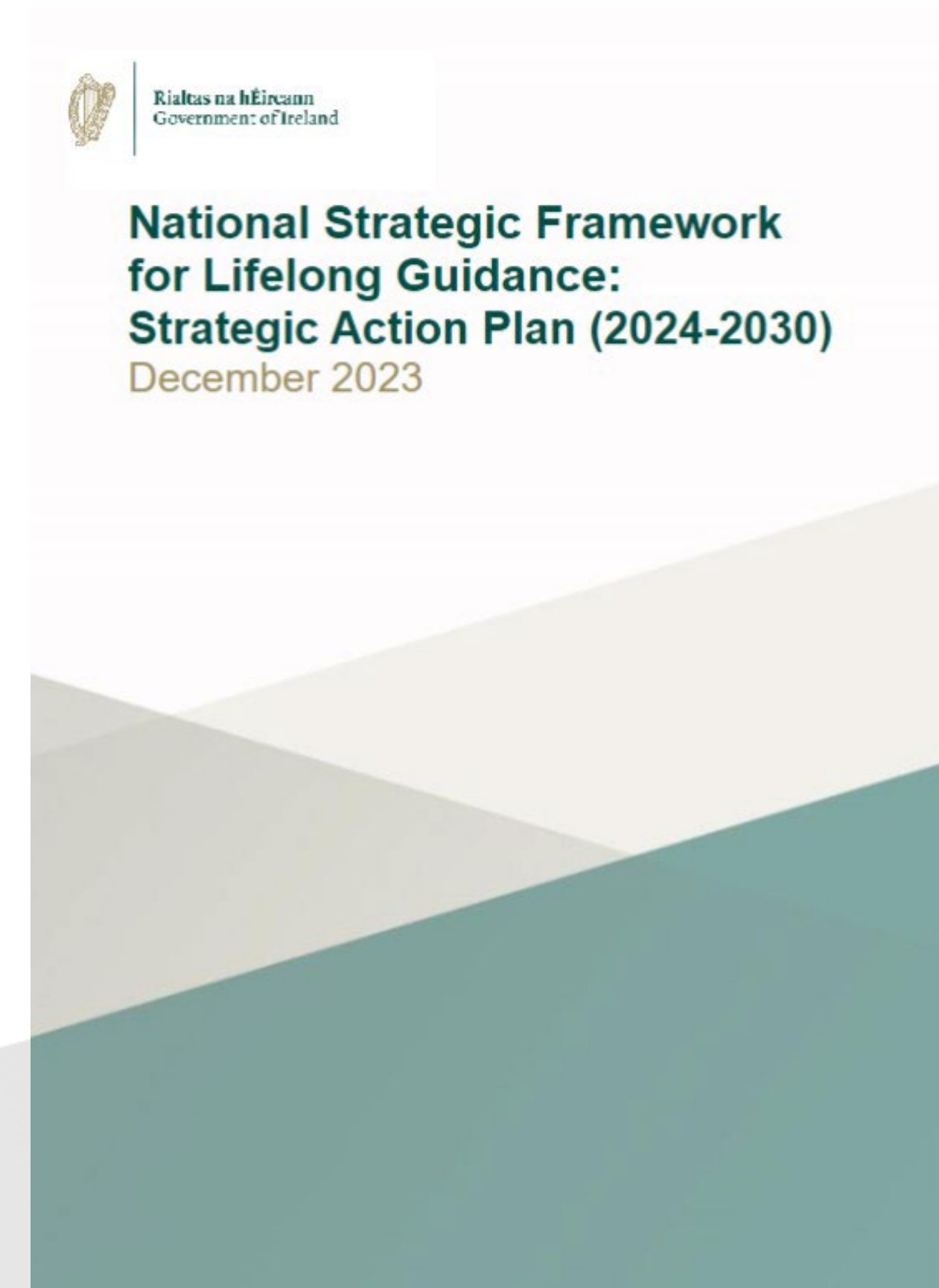
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[Available here](#)



[Available here](#)



[Available here](#)



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Progress to date



Action 4.3: Explore mechanisms of increasing guidance counsellor supply through provision of training programmes.

Action 5.4: Consider the effectiveness of the guidance allocation model in post-primary schools with a view to strengthening the quality of guidance counselling services

Action 2.6: Ensure provision of guidance supports to students in special schools is delivered by appropriately trained professionals



What is Whole School Guidance (WSG)?

Whole School Guidance



What is whole school guidance, in the context of the Education Act?

9(c)'A school shall use its available resources to ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices,





All members of the school community
(school leaders, middle management, teaching and non-teaching staff,
learners, parents and families) feel responsible and play an active role.

The concept of a whole school approach allows for the entire system
of actors and their inter-relationships in and around schools to be
considered, acknowledging that each stakeholder has a part to play
in supporting the learners' educational journey and nurturing their
learning experience

Key points



The ‘contemporary’ model of guidance in post primary schools:

1. Whole School Approach (guidance counsellor is specialised and pivotal).
2. Longstanding v’s new concept (?)
3. Whole School Guidance Plan

Information Note 0001/2024



- Identify guidance needs (along the continuum: all, some few)
- Plan how to meet the needs in line with available resources

| Activity | Provided by | Guidance for all/some/a few |
|---|--|--|
| Open invitation to students and parents to attend School Open Night in September of fifth and sixth class | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All staff members;• Presentation by principal | All |
| Facilitation of entrance assessment | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guidance counsellor and SEN department, school management | Some <i>(See point 1 of 0001/2023 for more)</i> |
| Student and parent information meeting in May prior to joining | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• School management, year head, tutors, guidance counsellor(s) and wellbeing co-ordinator; (some or all of the above, appropriate to each school) | All |
| Tour of school to ensure all areas familiar and accessible for students with disability | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Member of student support team as appropriate;• Student leaders, as appropriate | Some |
| Family meetings with parents where special circumstances apply | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• School management, guidance counsellor(s), SEN representative, student support team representative; (some or all of the above, appropriate to student needs) | Few |
| Induction day in late August, at beginning of first year | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• School management, guidance counsellor(s), chaplain, year head and | All |



WSG Policy

Circular 0001/2025 [available here](#)



1. Introduction
2. Purpose
3. Outlines WSG
4. Outlines role of GCIIr
5. Guidance needs (students and parents)
6. Career-management skills, employer engagement and pathways
7. Allocation
8. Characteristics of effective WSG
9. Counselling Supervision
10. Language and terminology

Circular: 0001/2025

**To: The Managerial Authorities and Principals
of Recognised Post-Primary Schools**
Guidance in Post-Primary Schools

(updating circular 0041/2024)

1. Introduction

[Section 9\(c\)](#) of The Education Act (1998) states that a school shall use its available resources to "ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices". This circular provides information to managerial authorities and principals in relation to whole-school guidance (WSG) as the appropriate model of practice in contemporary post-primary schools.

This circular is written in the context of [the National Strategic Framework for Lifelong Guidance](#) and accompanying [Strategic Action Plan \(2024-2030\)](#). Within the framework, four pillars and eight objectives underpin a clear vision for lifelong guidance in Ireland. This circular provides a foundation for the application of the concepts outlined in the framework, to support and strengthen guidance planning and practice within the post-primary sector.

2. Purpose of this circular

The purpose of this circular is to provide post-primary schools with information to support well-informed implementation of WSG planning and practice in the context

Circular 0001/2025



- Clarifies specialised and pivotal role of guidance counsellor in the context of WSG
- Notes qualifications of guidance counsellors
- Clarifies expectation in terms of timetabling
- Highlights importance of supervision



Standards and quality

Information Note 0001/2024 [available here](#)



Provides clear and practical support around WSG.

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Includes several examples.

Information Note TC 0001/2024

Provides clear and practical support around WSG planning

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

**Information Note for Principals, Guidance Counsellors and
Guidance Teams in relation to Whole-School Guidance**

1. Introduction

This information note is intended to support Whole-School Guidance (WSG) practice in all recognised post-primary schools. This information note draws on many guidance-related publications, those referred to directly are listed at the end of this document. This information note builds on previous publications to provide an overview of WSG in post-primary schools

Information note 0009/2023 [available here](#)



- Supports schools with regard to Circular 0028/2023
- The Junior Cycle programme must include guidance related learning. Guidance can be included under the umbrella wellbeing hours OR as an ‘other area of learning.’
- Wellbeing and guidance
- [Junior Cycle Guidance Related Learning](#)

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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

Other guidance policy supports



[Circular 0084/2024](#) Advice on the use of assessment instruments/tests for Guidance or for additional and special educational needs (SEN) in post-primary schools

[Information Note 0003/2024:](#) Storage and transfer of guidance-counselling notes

[Information Note 0008/2023:](#) Personal and Social Guidance Counselling





Senior Cycle Redevelopment

Transition Year Programme Statement



Table 1: Student Dimensions.

| Student Dimension | Description |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Personal Growth | Students mature socially and emotionally over the course of the year, developing in areas that include health and wellbeing, autonomy, identity, empathy and leadership. |
| Being a Learner | Building on their previous experiences, students begin to develop as senior cycle students, embracing opportunities and strategies for learning that work best for the student now and into the future. |
| Civic and Community Engagement | Students make a positive difference in their schools, communities and society. They learn to act on their responsibilities and exercise their rights as local, national and global citizens in ethical and sustainable ways. |
| Career Exploration | Students explore diverse future pathways in a guided and coordinated manner, gaining first-hand workplace experience, and developing career-related competencies. |



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Transition Year
Programme Statement

For introduction across all schools in September 2025.

Prepared by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)

Student experiences

- Work placements during the year.
- Guided reflective tasks on their experiences and placements in TY.
- Subjects and modules on the senior cycle curriculum that link to a range of future pathways.
- Career guidance and classroom support on a range of future pathways.
- Guided creation of a portfolio capturing their reflections on career exploration.
- A variety of learning opportunities that improve practical and vocational skills.
- Access to career-related events or learning environments.
- Guest speakers from a diversity of backgrounds and careers.
- Short, certified courses or micro-credentials.
- Opportunities for assessing aptitudes and abilities.

Developmental indicators

- Being more informed on the links between education and career opportunities.
- Increasing their awareness of personal interests, aptitudes, values and dispositions.
- Identifying and reviewing career-related goals more regularly.
- Having a greater capacity to research and critically reflect upon career pathways.
- Acquiring more vocational, organisational and communication skills.
- Learning how to generate ideas and turn ideas into action.
- Improving their workplace knowledge and behaviours through first-hand experience.
- Having more awareness of the world of work and enterprise.

Accommodation of components in the TY Curriculum



Career Exploration

Work Placement Community Placement

An appropriate and feasible balance of work-based and community-based placements.

A time allocation amounting to the equivalent of two to four weeks of the programme is suggested.

Career guidance

One class per week or classes timed to target key career-related learning or events during the year.

Additional career-related experiences

For example: guest speakers, tasters in apprenticeships/traineeships/ further education/higher education, information days, government supported developmental awards, certified short courses.

Some additional career-related experiences provided by the school may only arise during the year and would need to be notified to students, teachers and parents as soon as is practical.



Assessment

Recognitio
n

Reportin
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Reflectio
n

Participation

Engagement

Transition Year Programme Statement



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Transition Year Programme Statement

For introduction across all schools in September 2025.
Prepared by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)

Other helpful links regarding SCR



[gov.ie - Senior Cycle Redevelopment](#)
SCR info notes

[Transition Year | Curriculum Online](#)
New Programme Statement and other resources

[Senior Cycle Subjects | Curriculum Online](#)

Ones that are in development/draft including
LCVP

[Schedule of senior cycle subjects for
redevelopment...](#)



Senior Cycle Redevelopment
Athfhorbairt na Sraithe Sinsearaí



Evolving Policy



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National Consultation on Post-Primary Guidance Within a Lifelong Guidance Landscape

Open Call to All Stakeholders
and Invitation to Participate





Current research on guidance will lead to the production of six key policy resources for use in post-primary schools:

1. report on research, focusing on effectiveness of allocation model
2. guidelines document
3. a role document for the guidance counsellors
4. a guidance programme
5. an editable template for a WSG plan and;
6. updated programme recognition framework.



Support


The Guidance Unit (CAP)



[Gov.ie/guidance](https://gov.ie/guidance)

guidance@education.gov.ie

carol_guidea@education.gov.ie

 [gov.ie](#)

[News](#) [Departments](#) [Services](#) | [Search](#) [Gaeilge](#)

Publication

Guidance

From: [Department of Education](#)
Published on: 8 August 2022
Last updated on: 17 April 2025

- [1. Guidance in education](#)
- [2. Lifelong guidance consultation, framework and action plan](#)
- [3. Training and qualifications for guidance counsellors in post-primary schools](#)
- [4. Working as a guidance counsellor in Ireland](#)
- [5. Circulars, information notes, assessment instruments and other publications](#)
- [6. Oide guidance team support](#)
- [7. Guidance-counselling supervision scheme](#)
- [8. Guidance support service to the European Schools](#)
- [9. National Policy Group supporting the advancement of lifelong guidance](#)
- [10. Legislation and policy statements about guidance](#)
- [11. Indecon review of career-guidance tools and information](#)
- [12. National and international guidance bodies](#)
- [13. Useful links](#)

[*Click here for a shortcut to all current guidance material and publications*](#)



search...

JIGSAW

Young people's
health in mind

About Jigsaw

Get support

Get involved

NEED URGENT HELP

NEART

Jigsaw's mental health supports for post-
primary schools



A partnership between Jigsaw and the National
Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) /
Department of Education

Neart

Supporting mental health in post-primary schools

JIGSAW
Young people's
health in mind



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SPEAK





Guidance Counselling Supervision Scheme

Six 2-hour group sessions paid for by the Department of Education per school year

Guidance counsellors are released from school to attend
Qualified supervisors support the guidance counsellors

Oide Support



Whole School Guidance Webinars

Whole School Guidance for Senior School Leaders

School Support

Oide Guidance Website

<https://tinyurl.com/mtcx53pp>

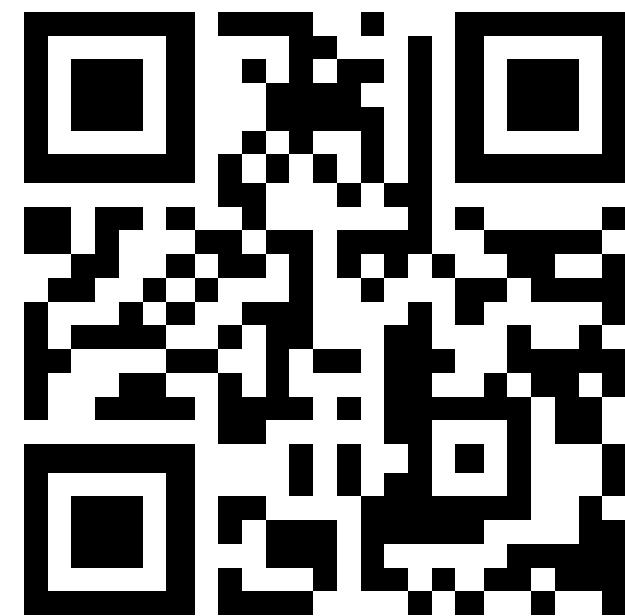


Oide Guidance School Support



To apply:

<https://tinyurl.com/year7tuu>





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