**Whole School Guidance Planning:**

**A sample / template document to support outlining & planning   
digitalised Guidance at the beginning of academic year 2020/2021**

This document outlines initial content which may be added to/ included in a schools’ Whole School Guidance Plan where the provision of digitalised Guidance in schools is required.

Digitalised Guidance is an emerging area of guidance provision which began nationwide in March 2020, following Covid19 school closures.

This resource has been collated by the NCGE in consultation with the Department of Education in response to many requests from Guidance Counsellors since March 2020.

The aim of this resource is to facilitate reflection and planning in post-primary schools at a time when digitalised contact with students is emerging and evolving. This resource not intended to be prescriptive, exhaustive nor final where the provision of digitalised Whole School Guidance is concerned. This resource provides suggestions of key areas which need to be discussed and agreed upon within schools at the current time (start of academic year 2020/21). This planning document should be reviewed and updated regularly in a school as the landscape of digitalised guidance evolves over the short and medium term.

It should be noted that this document is intended as an ‘add-on’ to a detailed and annually reviewed Whole School Guidance Plan.

**Digitalised Whole School Guidance Insert for Whole School Guidance Plan:**

**Academic Year 2020/2021**

**INSERT SCHOOL NAME**

**Introduction to Digitalised Guidance**

This resource outlines the decisions made at local school level about the logistics of digitalised / online school guidance provision in our school.

All content was discussed and agreed between School Management and the School Guidance Counsellor(s). The approach to digitalised Guidance in our school is documented here in line with:

**A Whole School Guidance Framework document (NCGE, 2017)**   
<https://www.ncge.ie/resource/ncge-whole-school-guidance-framework>

**(Covid-19) Support information for Guidance Counsellors in Schools (NCGE, 2020)**  
<https://www.ncge.ie/resource/covid-19-ncge-support-information-GC-schools>  
  
**Continuity of Guidance Counselling - Guidelines for schools providing online support for students (DES, 2020)**<https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Post-Primary-School-Policies/Policies/continuity-of-guidance-counselling-guidelines-for-schools-providing-online-support-for-students.pdf>

**Continuity of Schooling (DES, 2020)**  
[www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/continuity-of-schooling/continuity-of-schooling.html](http://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/continuity-of-schooling/continuity-of-schooling.html)

Digitalised Guidance is provided in our school in line with the continuum of support model (NCGE, 2017 p12): Guidance for A Few, Guidance for Some, Guidance for All. This resource outlines the provision of digitalised guidance in line with that continuum. The first section outlines the logistical approach for ‘Guidance for A Few,’ a second section notes the approach for ‘Guidance for Some’, and the third section refers to ‘Guidance for All.’ In addition, a final section outlines how our school will coordinate Whole School Guidance, should the school have to close for part of the year or if some staff must self-isolate.

**Guidance for A Few:**

In INSERT SCHOOL NAME ALL students will have access to one-to-one supports from teachers, support teams and the Guidance Counsellor, where appropriate.

Parents / Guardians will be informed that these services are available by:  
  
*e.g. distribution of an information leaflet at the beginning of the school year*  
*e.g. a notification by email if our school must close during academic year 2020/2021*  
  
In each of these communications, parents are invited to contact the school directly should they wish to discuss the provision of such supports.

InINSERT SCHOOL NAME we agree to undertake our **‘Guidance for a Few’** (one-to-one sessions) as follows:

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| --- | --- |
| Platform Used: | e.g. Microsoft Teams / Zoom etc. |
| How and when students may be contacted: | A schedule of virtual meetings should be planned with students by email during a limited time frame (e.g. following the ‘normal’ local school timetable, 9am-4pm). Contact with students should not occur outside of these agreed times.  Personal phone numbers will not be exchanged between the Guidance Counsellor and students / parents / guardians. |
| Contact with parents may arise when: | A Child Protection issue arises.  Our approach to contacting parents in this event is: [outline agreed approach for instances where contact with parents arises] |
| Students are identified as needing one-to-one support through several school processes: | Self-Referral – students may self-refer by sending an email to the Guidance Counsellor. Students are notified about how to connect with the guidance counsellor at the beginning of the school year and in bi-weekly assemblies.  Student support team: Teachers are aware they can contact the student support team by email if they are concerned about a student. The student support team will then take appropriate action which may include referral to the Guidance Counsellor.  Parents: If parents are concerned for their children, they may contact the year head. Parents are informed of how to contact each year head on the school website and in the welcome letter sent at the start of the year.  Other Avenues: We will monitor the other means through which students are referred this year and will add those means to this document for future years. |

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| Frequency of Contact: | The agreed procedures to facilitate students to be notified of their initial appointment in advance in [insert school name] is*:  e.g. through school email*  Further contact will be agreed with students as appropriate during each meeting.  This will be clearly communicated to the student in each meeting and/or at the beginning of the series of sessions e.g. ‘We will work together for three sessions and review our plan on the third session’ |
| Session Length: | Each one-to-one meeting would not exceed the duration of normal appointment or lesson times e.g. 40 minutes, except in the event of an emergency. |
| Contract: | A contract will be made with students at the beginning of the one-to one sessions as it would have been in a ‘face to face’ situation (this can be done verbally or in writing depending on original school policy).  Included in this contract, it will be noted that neither party will record or take photographs of the session.  Students and parents are informed that a record of the session will be kept by the Guidance Counsellor, in line with normal professional practice and the school’s ‘Confidentiality Policy.’ |
| DLP and DDLP: | If digitalised guidance is taking place, our school procedures for communication with the DLP and the DDLP are:  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  If an emergency/child protection issue arises during a time when digitalised guidance is taking place, the agreed protocol is to:  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Communication with management: | School management are fully aware of and have agreed on all aspects of this document.  This document was discussed and agreed on [insert date].  It is agreed that this document will be reviewed on [insert date].  The guidance counsellor will meet on a [e.g. weekly / bi-monthly / monthly] basis to update management on how digitalised one-to-one guidance appointments are progressing. |

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| --- | --- |
| Record Keeping & GDPR: | A record of every one-to-one guidance counselling meeting will be kept by the Guidance Counsellor and stored appropriately in line with normal professional practice    Our school uses the NCGE one-to-one meeting record, which can be downloaded and used as an editable PDF document or printed off for use as paper records.  <https://www.ncge.ie/resource/record-templates-guidance-counselling-one-one-meetings-students>  In our school we securely save our records by e.g. using a password protected work laptop. The files are saved into a dedicated folder and are in no way accessible by a third party.  OR  We store paper records. The Guidance Counsellor ensures these are safely stored, are not accessible to others and are returned to the school premises as soon as is practicable. |
| ‘Netiquette’ | A school may have a separate document on what is acceptable in terms of netiquette. This would ideally be communicated to all members of the school community as a group. This document may contain additional information such as a statement that all cameras must be on for the duration of the meeting and that students should be appropriately dressed/in an appropriate location for the duration of the meeting. |
| Logistics | The Guidance Counsellor will ask the student where they are at the time of the meeting and make a note of it e.g. are students at home / in a friend’s house / with a relation etc. This is done to ensure students are in a safe and appropriate environment. In addition, if a child protection or safety issue arises, Guidance Counsellors will know where the students are. |

**Guidance for Some:**

A definition of ‘Guidance for Some’ can be found on the ‘Whole School Guidance Framework’ document (NCGE, 2017 p13)  
[www.ncge.ie/resource/ncge-whole-school-guidance-framework](http://www.ncge.ie/resource/ncge-whole-school-guidance-framework)

In INSERT SCHOOL NAME digitalised ‘Guidance for Some’ will operate in line with our school’s ‘Remote Learning Policy’ as follows:

Insert description of how timetabled classes with students will run

Insert description of how non-timetabled classes will run e.g. if your school does not have timetabled classes with 5th year but you plan to give them one Guidance class per term.

Insert description of how students will be invited to take part in group sessions on certain topics e.g. for those students applying to UCAS / those students who would like to learn about a career in the health sciences

Insert description on how ‘groups’ of students will be contacted e.g. through school email

Include detail on how you will work with students on this e.g. collecting and giving feedback on work done / enabling students to ask questions

**Guidance for All:**

A definition of ‘Guidance for All’ can be found on the ‘Whole School Guidance Framework’ document (NCGE, 2017 p12)  
[www.ncge.ie/resource/ncge-whole-school-guidance-framework](http://www.ncge.ie/resource/ncge-whole-school-guidance-framework)

In INSERT SCHOOL NAME digitalised ‘Guidance for All’ will operate in line with our school’s ‘Remote Learning Policy’ as follows:

Insert description of how Guidance Counsellor connects with all students e.g. Whole School Online Assembly / Year Group Assembly / All senior cycle students etc.

Note how regularly Guidance Counsellors will connect with ‘All’ e.g. once a term

Include detail on how you will communicate this to students e.g. by student email / text to parents

**Coordination of Whole School Guidance:**This section describes how the school approaches the management and coordination of whole school guidance if a blended/digitalised approach must be undertaken in our school.

How often will Guidance Counsellor meet with school management?

What are the ’emergency’ Child protection related procedures: who will be contacted and how will they be contacted?

How often and through which platform will Student Support Team meet?

The content of this document has been agreed by [Principal]   
and [Guidance Counsellor]   
on [Date]

This document will be reviewed and updated on [Date]