



Oide

Tacú leis an bhFoghlaim
Ghairmiúil i measc Ceannairí
Scoile agus Múinteoirí

Supporting the Professional
Learning of School Leaders
and Teachers

Supporting the Planning for Junior Cycle Guidance

IGC Conference
TU Dublin, Grangegorman Campus
6th and 7th March, 2026

Professional Learning Leaders in Oide Guidance:
Sinéad Duffy & Niamh Uí Thuama



Our focus of this Guidance PLE is to...

- Support guidance counsellors to navigate Junior Cycle Guidance by linking Department of Education and Youth **policy** and educational **research** with **practice**.
- Provide opportunities for collaborative exploration of **student needs** at Junior Cycle in identifying key **themes** in context.
- Support participants to use these insights to **inform their Junior Cycle Guidance programme** within their own school context.



1.5hrs



<https://tinyurl.com/mw4svex5>



Welcome and Introductions

Let's Introduce ourselves.....

1. Name, School and professional role
2. Rate your knowledge of JC Guidance (1-5)
3. Complete the following sentence:

*“In my school, Junior Cycle Guidance
currently feels like...”*



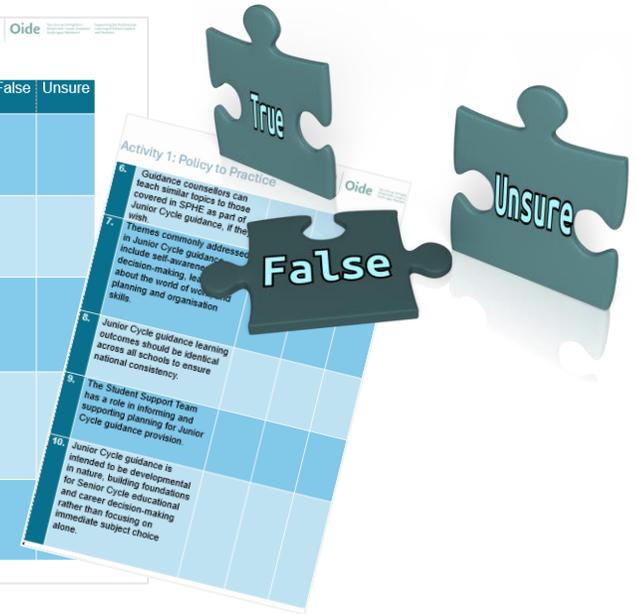


Activity 1: Policy to Practice



Activity 1: Policy to Practice

| Statement | True | False | Unsure |
|--|------|-------|--------|
| 1. Junior Cycle guidance must be delivered as a timetabled weekly class to meet Department of Education and Youth requirements. | | | |
| 2. There is currently no prescribed minimum or maximum number of hours for guidance-related learning at Junior Cycle. | | | |
| 3. Guidance-related learning at Junior Cycle may be delivered through Wellbeing hours and/or through other areas of learning, depending on whole-school planning decisions. | | | |
| 4. Classroom guidance-related learning at Junior Cycle may be delivered by teachers other than the guidance counsellor where this is agreed as part of whole-school guidance planning. | | | |
| 5. One-to-one guidance counselling is the primary and expected mode of guidance provision for Junior Cycle students. | | | |



Let's examine statements in relation to policy, practice and research!

“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”
Helen Keller



<https://tinyurl.com/mw4svex5>



Guidance Planning and Provision

“Guidance is, by definition, person-centred and holistic. It supports an individual’s personal and social, educational and career development: guidance facilitates and empowers individuals to make informed decisions and life choices.”

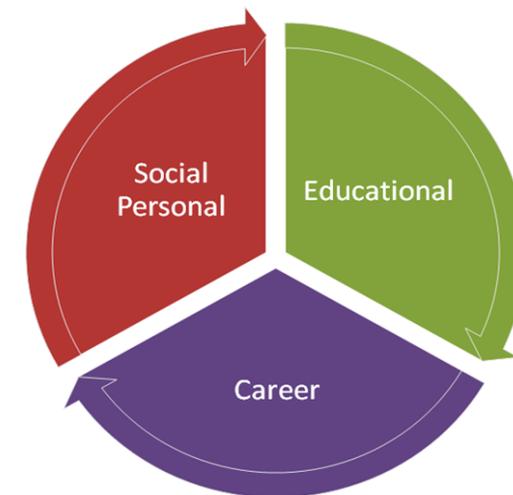
DEY Circular 01/2025 p.1

Effective Guidance “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”

DEY Information Note 01/2024, p.3

9(c) ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices.

Education Act 1998





Junior Cycle Guidance Policy

1 DEY Junior Cycle Circulars 28/2023

The Junior Cycle Programme **must include** guidance education

2 NCCA JC Wellbeing Guidelines 2021

The framework for JC 2015 states that guidance provision **may be** included in the hours available for Wellbeing

3 DEY Information Note 09/2023

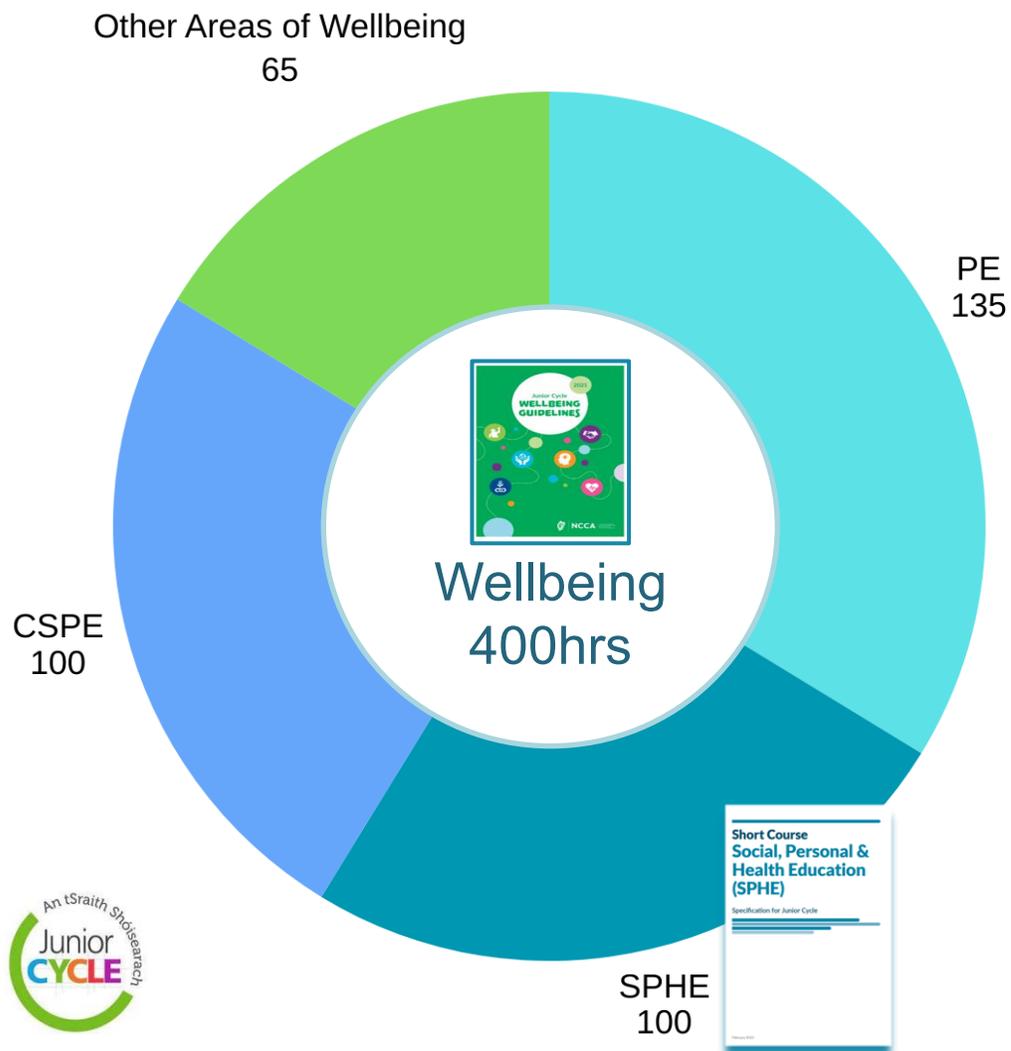
At Junior Cycle level, **three types of guidance** activities are generally undertaken....whole school activities...one-to-one guidance counselling.....and classroom guidance.

There is **no maximum or minimum** allocation of hours for Guidance provision at Junior Cycle

Classroom guidance related learning can be provided by the **guidance counsellor or another teacher** in accordance with Whole School Guidance planning



Situating Guidance at Junior Cycle



*“**Collaboration** between guidance counsellors and subject coordinators is key to the success of a comprehensive and effective Wellbeing programme.... In particular, coordination and communication between the **SPHE teachers and the guidance counsellor** is critical to **identify potential overlap** of learning between SPHE and learning in Junior Cycle Guidance, and to ensure that they complement each other and avoid unhelpful duplication...”*

NCCA JC Wellbeing Guidelines 2021, Section 4.3, p. 46





Situating Guidance at Junior Cycle

Table 3: The mathematics of timetabling wellbeing

| Schools are required to provide 28 hours per week class tuition time for students. | If schools opt for the maximum number of 10 subjects* | If schools opt for 9 subjects* |
|--|---|---|
| 28hrs x 33.4 weeks x 3 years = 2,805 hours | 3 subjects @ 240 hrs each 7 subjects @ 200 hrs each* = 2,120 hrs + 400 hours wellbeing programme = 2,520 hours This leaves an additional 285 hours, over 3 years, for whatever else is deemed necessary. | 3 subjects @ 240 hrs each 6 subjects @ 200 hrs each* = 1,920 hrs + 400 hours wellbeing programme = 2,320 hours This leaves an additional 485 hours, over 3 years, for whatever else is deemed necessary. |

*or equivalent mix of subjects and short courses.

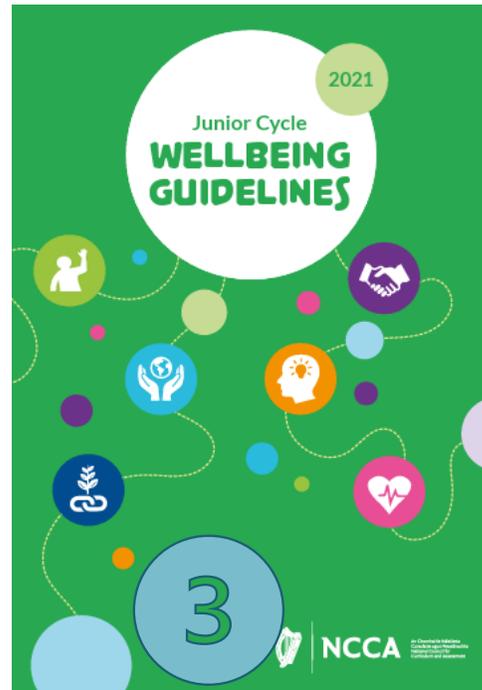
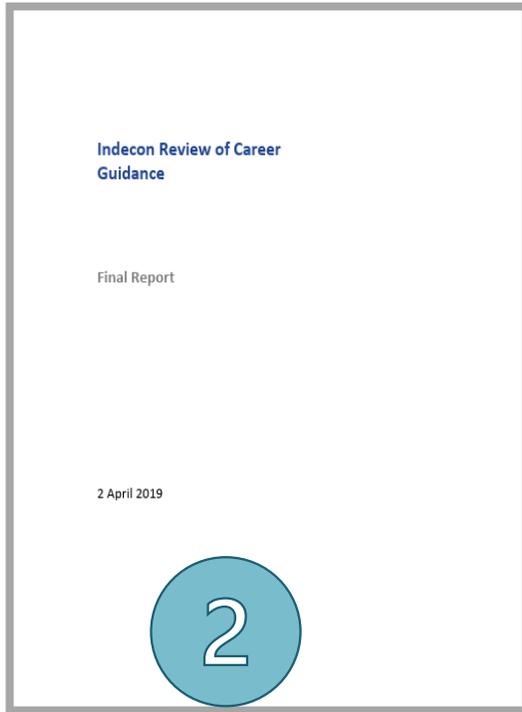
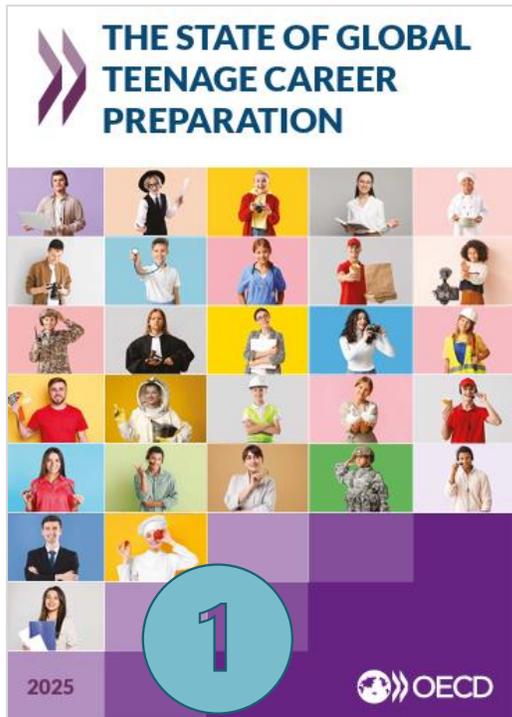
NCCA JC Wellbeing Guidelines 2021, sec 4.4, p.40

1 Circular 0076/2020 https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0076_2020.pdf

Activity 2: Research, Rational and Planning JC Guidance



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What do the three extracts tell us about the **purpose** of Junior Cycle Guidance and **planning** for it in schools?



<https://tinyurl.com/mw4svex5>

OECD Research on Career Preparation



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39% of 15-year-olds are unclear of the connection between school and future career plans.

21% are 'misaligned.'

Those that have higher levels of uncertainty at 15 years leads to poor employment outcomes at age 25.

Career aspirations are narrow.

OECD The State of Global Teenage Career Preparation, 2025.

Supporting students at a Junior Cycle to explore, experience and think about their futures matters





Table 3.1: Guidance Counsellors Estimates of Timing of Initial Consideration of Career Choice and Receipt of Career Information

| Percentage of Guidance Counsellors/Practitioners | Timing of <u>Initial Consideration</u> of Career Choice | Timing of <u>Initial Receipt</u> of Career Information |
|--|---|--|
| In Primary School | 17.4% | 0.3% |
| In Junior Cycle – First, Second or Third Year | 31.7% | 26.3% |
| During Transition Year | 30.4% | 47.8% |
| During Fifth Year | 8.7% | 14.7% |
| During Sixth Year | 5.1% | 5.6% |
| Post Leaving Cert | 3.3% | 2.0% |
| FET | 3.3% | 3.3% |
| Total Respondents | 100% | 100% |

Source: *Indecon analysis of Confidential Survey of Guidance Counsellors*



Table 3.2: When Second-level Student Respondents First Started Thinking about What to Do Upon Leaving School/Education

| Age at which you first started thinking about what to do upon leaving school/education | Percentage of <u>Second-level Students</u> |
|--|--|
| In Primary School | 24.8% |
| In Junior Cycle – First, Second or Third Year | 37.2% |
| During Transition Year | 30.3% |
| Other | 7.7% |
| Total | 100% |

Source: *Indecon analysis of Confidential Survey of Second-level and Higher-level Students*



Early intervention in guidance matters for career decisions.

Building knowledge on Guidance Needs



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“Schools are also encouraged to develop units of learning that meet a specific need identified through consultation with students/parents/teachers.”

NCCA JC Wellbeing Guidelines 2021, Section 4.3, p.46



What ways can we identify student needs in Guidance?



A Variety of Data Gathering Methods



Professional Knowledge & Evaluation

SST

“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.”

Focus Groups

Surveys

Google Forms

Microsoft Forms

DEY Information Note 09/2023, p 3



Survey Prompts Sample



'In creating a WSG plan, the identified needs of students and parents/guardians/carers are incorporated. This is a data-informed approach to planning, which can be facilitated in many ways...'

DEY Circular 1/2025 p.3

Whole-school Guidance – Junior Cycle Student Survey

This survey was compiled to capture the student voice in [__ insert school name __] to support the development of our whole-school guidance plan.

Answers given in the survey will be analysed by the whole-school guidance team. The identity of students and their answers will not be shared outside of that team.

1. What year group are you in?

- 1st
- 2nd
- 3rd
- 4th
- L1
- L2

2. Do you understand clearly what is meant by 'whole-school guidance'?

- I could explain what whole-school guidance means to someone else
- I think I understand what it means
- I am unsure of what it means
- I do not know what it means.

3. Where do you feel that you get support in [school name __] in any of your Personal and Social, Educational and/or Career development?

(Tick as many as are relevant)

- Teachers
- Other members of staff
- Class teachers/ Year Heads
- Chaplain
- Guidance Counsellor
- Senior School Leaders (Principal/Deputy)
- Subject classes



<https://tinyurl.com/mw4svex5>

Activity 3: Themes or Topics to Consider for JC Guidance



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Social and Personal

Educational

Career

1
2
3
4
5

1
2
3
4
5

1
2
3
4
5

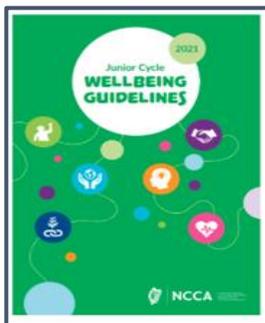


<https://tinyurl.com/mw4svex5>

JC Guidance Resources Supporting Planning



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Wellbeing Guidelines 2021

Provides sample themes for planning units of learning in Guidance (p47)

scoilnet

Guidance Related Resources

Guidance related lessons include a lesson plan, presentation and related worksheet.



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Information Note:

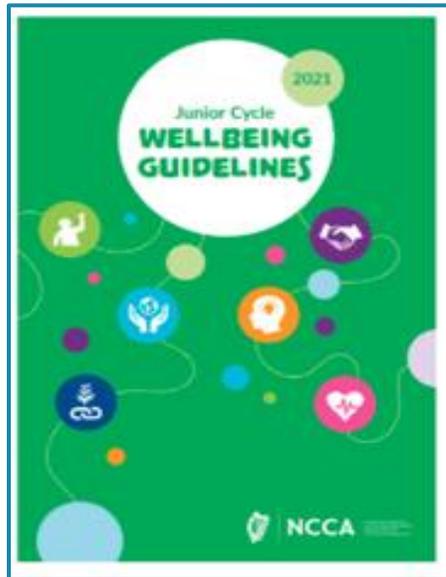
09/2023

and

Information Note: 1/2024

Provides sample learning outcomes and experiences that could inform Guidance planning for units of learning.

Sample Guidance Units of Learning: NCCA Wellbeing Guidelines



| 1 ST YEAR | 2 ND YEAR | 3 RD YEAR |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Making the transition to 1st year• Learning to learn• Awareness of personal strengths and interests• Setting personal and learning goals• Self-management and time management skills• Knowing where to go for help• Subject selection (where taster programmes exist)• Student mentor/buddies programme | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learning to learn• Reflecting on myself as a learner• Self-regulation for learning strategies• Setting personal and learning goals• Motivation• Developing skills for coping with the normal stresses of life• Career awareness | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Study skills• Organisational, planning and time management skills• Coping strategies in times of stress• Managing exam stress• Managing to maintain a balanced life• Identifying my values, strengths and interests and possible career pathways• Subject choice• Thinking about the right job for me |

See Section 4.7 of these guidelines for a sample guidance-related unit of learning

'Guidance Related Learning' through scoilnet.ie



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1st
YEAR

My School Supports - Part 1

Worksheet Lesson Plan Presentation

My School Supports - Part 2

Worksheet Lesson Plan Presentation

My School Year

Worksheet Lesson Plan Presentation

My Values

Worksheet Lesson Plan Presentation

My Pathways

Worksheet Lesson Plan Presentation

My Goal Setting

Worksheet Lesson Plan Presentation

My Connection with Nature

Presentation Lesson Plan Worksheet

2nd
YEAR

My Identity (Who I Am)

Worksheet Lesson Plan Presentation

My Mindset

Worksheet Lesson Plan Presentation

My Pathways after School

Worksheet Lesson Plan Presentation

S.M.A.R.T Goal Setting

Worksheet Lesson Plan Presentation

My Unique Values

Worksheet Lesson Plan Presentation

My Voice and how I Present Myself

Worksheet Lesson Plan Presentation

My Sustainable Learning

Presentation Lesson Plan

3rd
YEAR

My Skills

Worksheet Lesson Plan Presentation

My Exploration of Careers

Worksheet Lesson Plan Presentation

My Balanced Life

Worksheet Lesson Plan Presentation

My Subject Choice

Worksheet Lesson Plan Presentation

My Options after School

Worksheet Lesson Plan Presentation

Presenting Me

Worksheet Lesson Plan Presentation

My Sustainable Options

Presentation Worksheet Lesson Plan

Sample Themes from DEY

- 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.

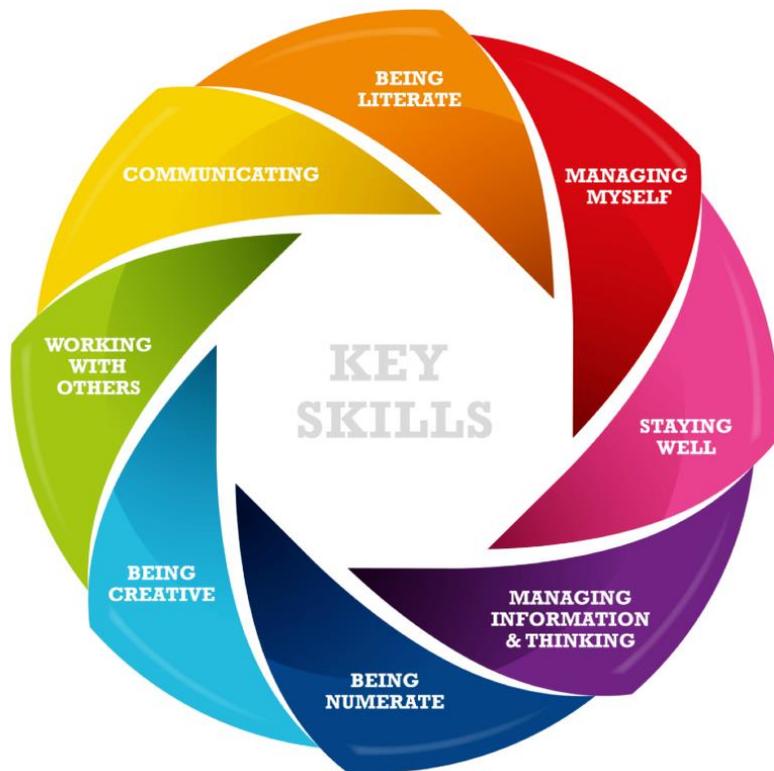
DEY Information Note, 09/2023, p3

| Activity |
|---|
| Classroom guidance in modules 'Guidance-related learning' Unit 1 (lessons with clear learning outcomes and an Appendix I) available through careers portal and scoilnet.ie |
| Information meeting on subject choice and levels if difficulties arise |
| Meetings to discuss how first weeks in post-primary school are going |
| Competition for 1 st years during careers week – 'Design a poster on a career you might be interested in – include information such as what you like about the career / what might be challenging and where in the world the career exists' |





JC Planning Considerations



The 8 Key Skills of Junior Cycle





Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement

Guidance can be reported in the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement in either:

- Other Areas of Learning
- Other Areas of Wellbeing



| State Certified Final Examination | | Classroom-Based Assessments - Subjects | |
|--|----------|---|--|
| Irish L2 (H) | Achieved | Irish L2 | Language Portfolio: Not Reported Communicative task: Not Reported |
| English (H) | Achieved | English | Oral Communication: In Line with Expectations The Collection of the Student Texts: Not Reported |
| Mathematics (H) | Achieved | Mathematics | Mathematical Investigation: Yet to Meet Expectations Statistical Investigation: Not Reported |
| History (C) | Achieved | History | The Past in My Present: In Line with Expectations A Life in Time: Not Reported |
| Geography (C) | Achieved | Geography | Geography in the news: In Line with Expectations My geography: Not Reported |
| Engineering (C) | Achieved | Engineering | Engineering in action: Not Reported Research and Development: Not Reported |
| Business Studies (C) | Merit | Business Studies | Business in action: In Line with Expectations Presentation: Not Reported |
| Science (C) | Merit | Science | Expanded Experimental Investigation: In Line with Expectations Science in Society Investigation: Not Reported |
| Wood Technology (C) | Achieved | Wood Technology | Wood science in our environment: In Line with Expectations Student self-analysis and evaluation: Not Reported |
| Religious Education (C) | Achieved | Religious Education | A Person of Commitment: In Line with Expectations The human search for meaning: Not Reported |
| Other Areas of Learning | | Classroom-Based Assessments - Short Courses | |
| [Empty box for Other Areas of Learning] | | Wellbeing | |
| | | Physical Education | |
| | | SPHE (Social, Personal, Health Education) | |
| [Empty box for Other Areas of Wellbeing] | | CSPPE (Civic, Social, Political Education) | |
| | | Other Areas of Wellbeing | |
| Principal: Mr. John Smith <i>John Smith</i> | | Year Head: Testing | Roll Number: 10000X |
| | | My Schools Cormacaddy, Ballymahon New Road, Athlone, Co. Westmeath N37 TR23 | |
| This JCPA recognises and records achievements in Junior Cycle. | | | |



A Balanced Guidance Programme

Continuum



Balance



Holistic

GUIDANCE FOR A FEW
More intensive, individual
or specialised

GUIDANCE FOR SOME
More targeted

GUIDANCE FOR ALL
Universal design

**Classroom
Guidance**

**One to
One and
Group
Work**

**SOCIAL
PERSONAL**

EDUCATIONAL

CAREER



Reflection

Turn to the person beside you and share:

- What **stood out** for you in today's PLE?
- Why **this is important** for Junior Cycle

Guidance in your school?



Further Supports



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Follow us on X: @Oide_Guidance



Email: guidance@oide.ie



Feedback

Your feedback on today's PLE is greatly appreciated!

<https://tinyurl.com/2sjex53m>



Oide Guidance Webinars 2026



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Whole-school Guidance for Senior School Leaders

Wednesday, 22nd April 11:15am [English]

or

An Aoine, 24 Aibreán 2026 11:15r.n. [Gaeilge]

Guidance in Transition Year

Tuesday, 28th April 2:15pm [English]

or

An Mháirt, 5 Bealtaine 2026 2:15i.n. [Gaeilge]



Post-primary Registration

Book Here



<https://oide.ie/apply-book-now/teachers/>



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