

OIDE GUIDANCE

NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2026



EMBEDDING EQUITY AND INCLUSION IN WHOLE-SCHOOL GUIDANCE (WSG)

A warm welcome to guidance counsellors, school leaders, and members of whole-school guidance planning teams.

As school communities become increasingly diverse, guidance continues to play a vital role in supporting inclusive, responsive practice that reflects the cultural identities and lived experiences of all students in our classrooms.

Inclusive guidance is rooted in the belief that every student's story matters. Through collaboration, teachers and guidance counsellors can reduce barriers, recognise individual backgrounds and experiences, and make pathways visible and accessible for all.

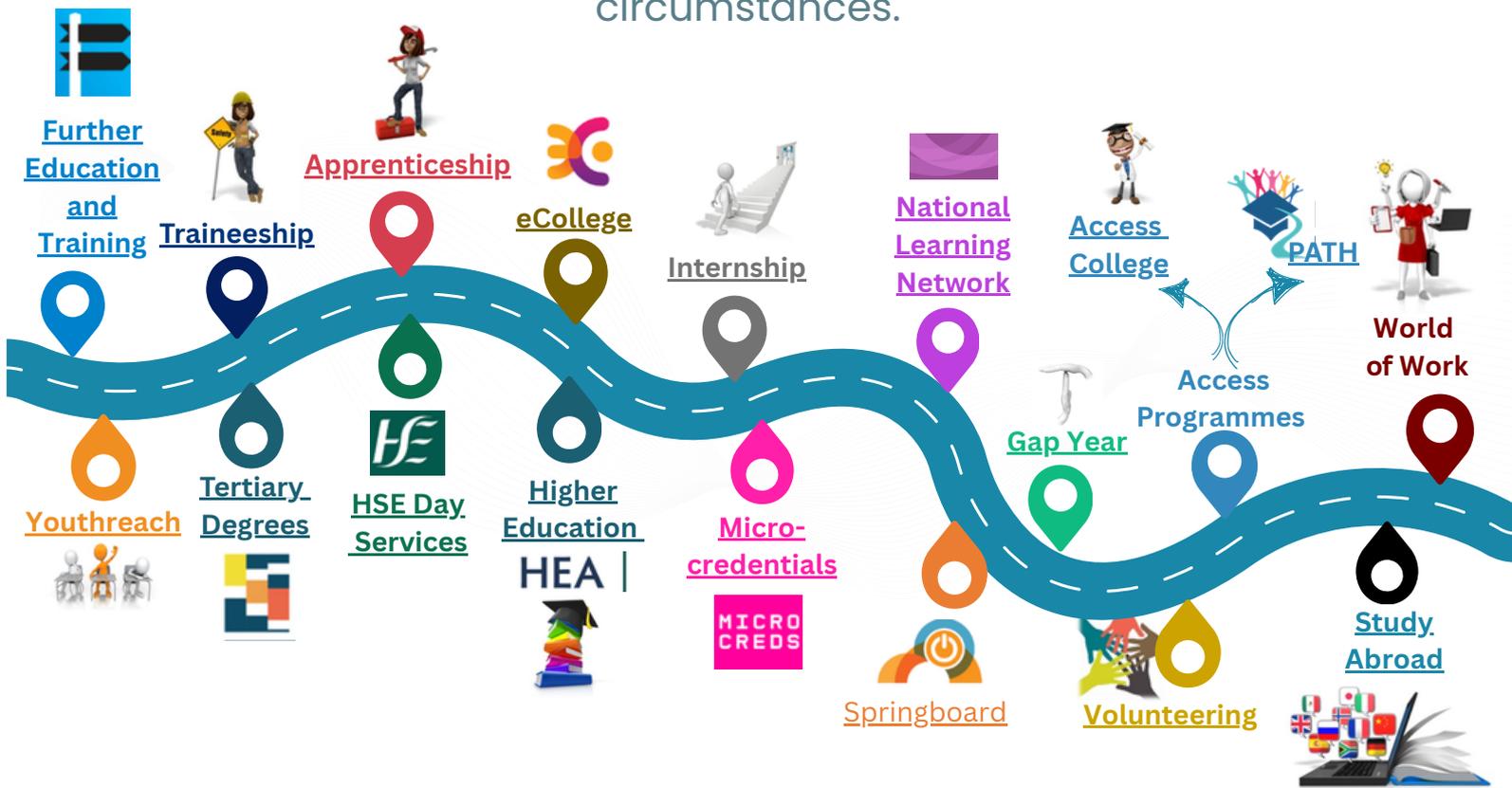
This edition highlights practical ways to embed inclusion awareness within whole-school guidance, including student-centred planning and approaches that foster belonging and aspiration.

This edition builds on the strong guidance practice already established in schools, affirming work that values and responds to students from all cultural backgrounds and identities, and supports every learner to shape their own future.

Inclusive Pathways

Your Path, Your Pace, Your Future

Inclusive pathways acknowledge that young people progress through education, training and work in different ways and at different times. By making a wide range of routes visible and accessible – including further education and training, apprenticeships, access programmes, higher education and employment – guidance supports students to see each pathway as valid, purposeful and responsive to their individual strengths and circumstances.



Guidance counsellors support students to navigate these options through informed, reflective conversations that promote confidence and agency. This inclusive approach reinforces a whole-school commitment to ensuring every learner can identify a pathway that supports their interests, wellbeing, aspirations and future participation in learning and work.



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Ghairmiúil i measc Ceannairí
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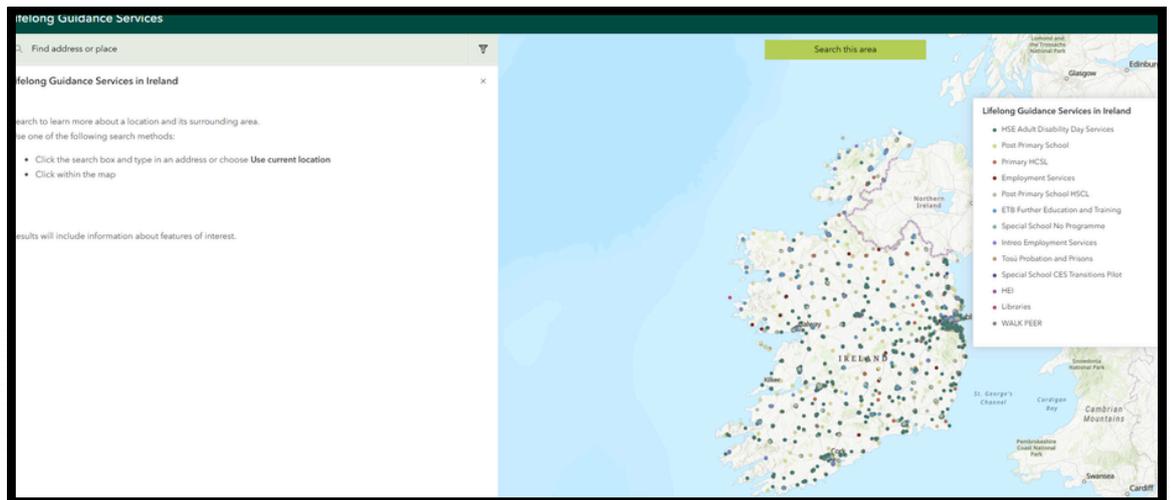
Supporting the Professional
Learning of School Leaders
and Teachers

DEY Map of Lifelong Guidance

Your Path, Your Pace, Your Future

This interactive map is designed to enhance awareness and visibility of lifelong learning, guidance, employment, and career advisory services throughout Ireland. Users can filter services by category, public access, delivery method, and other criteria to easily connect with guidance supports nationwide.

**Click on map
to access link**



Key Aims:

The purpose of this map is to enhance the visibility and awareness of lifelong guidance services from multiple perspectives:

Guidance practitioners
Policymakers and other stakeholders
Service users



‘Meaningful guidance is provided when it is informed by an awareness of the changing demographics of the people in the areas served, such as the increased diversity of the population and growing numbers of people with disabilities?’

Government of Ireland, National Strategic Framework for Lifelong Guidance, 2023



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PATH (PROGRAMME FOR ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION)

PATH is part of the Access and Widening Participation initiative designed to support greater inclusion in higher education. PATH is a strategic funding programme established to increase participation in third level education for students from under represented and disadvantaged backgrounds. It is structured around multiple strands that provide targeted supports, partnerships and initiatives aimed at reducing barriers to access, enhancing retention and fostering success for learners who might otherwise be excluded from higher education pathways.

Programme for Access to Higher Education (PATH) – The Five Strands

PATH 1 – Access to Initial Teacher Education (ITE)

Focuses on widening participation in teacher education programmes. It supports students from under represented groups to access teaching as a career through targeted outreach, financial supports and tailored entry routes.

PATH 2 – 1916 Bursary Fund

Provides financial bursaries and wraparound supports for students from priority and under represented groups to access and remain in higher education. The bursary supports both access and retention across participating higher education institutions.

PATH 3 – Further Education to Higher Education Transitions

Strengthens pathways from Further Education and Training (FET/PLC) into higher education. This strand promotes collaboration between FE providers and higher education institutions and supports learners transitioning between sectors.

PATH 4 – Supporting Students with Disabilities

Enhances supports for students with disabilities to access, participate and succeed in higher education. It focuses on improving capacity, inclusive practices and targeted student supports across institutions.

PATH 5 – Traveller and Roma Participation in Higher Education

Supports increased participation, retention and success of Traveller and Roma students through targeted outreach, culturally responsive supports and partnership working with communities.



PATH

Programme for Access to Higher Education

PATH 4, TÁNAISTE SIMON HARRIS:

Two years ago, I committed to changing higher education for people with an intellectual disability.

I do know what it's like to live in a family where sometimes the education system can seem like it closes a door in your face.

When I launched the PATH 4 programme in February 2024, I promised myself and families across Ireland that I would try to make a difference in our education system.

Today, that promise is a reality. 11 universities and colleges across Ireland now offer dedicated courses for students with intellectual disabilities 195 students currently enrolled and thriving in higher education

From Trinity College Dublin to Atlantic Technological University, from University College Cork to Dún Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology, our universities are opening their doors and proving that when given the opportunity, students with intellectual disabilities can thrive.

We're building an education system that is equal for everyone and where everyone can reach their fill potential in life.

We keep at it! But this progress matters

As Cited in LINKEDIN: 08 FEB 2026

TRAVELLER AND ROMA EDUCATION STRATEGY 2024–2030

The Traveller and Roma Education Strategy (TRES) 2024–2030 is a key government initiative aimed at improving educational experiences and outcomes for Traveller and Roma communities. It forms a central part of NTRIS II (National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy) 2024–2028 and is supported by detailed two-year implementation and action plans.

Currently, the TRES Implementation and Action Plan 2024–2026 is underway. This comprehensive plan spans early years, school-aged children, young people, and higher education, with a strong emphasis on key educational transitions.



Riailtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Traveller and Roma Education Strategy

2024–2030



Community Link Workers (CLWs)

To further support the strategy, 15 Community Link Workers (CLWs) are being appointed. These CLWs will work within School Completion Projects (SCPs), engaging directly with schools, communities, and families to support Traveller and Roma children and young people.

The Role of the CLW Includes:

- Building connections between families, schools, and communities to foster a sense of welcome and support.*
- Supporting students at key transition points—starting school, moving to secondary, and progressing to further education.*
- Promoting inclusion and belonging through anti-racism and intercultural understanding.*

Collaborating with school staff, HSCLs, SCPs, and other services to remove barriers to attendance and participation. Empowering families with knowledge of their rights and available supports. Establishing trusting relationships with Traveller and Roma children, young people, families, organisations, and communities.

Whole-school Guidance Teams in Schools

The TRES team recognises the vital role of whole-school guidance teams in schools in supporting Traveller and Roma pupils.

Two National Coordinators have been appointed within Tusla Education Support Service (TESS) to lead and coordinate the TESS TRES actions:

Megan Berry –
megan.berry@tusla.ie

Caroline Mhic Eoin –
caroline.mhiceoin@tusla.ie

TRES welcome any queries or contact from schools' Guidance teams seeking to enhance their inclusive practices.

INCLUSIVE GUIDANCE PRACTICE FOR STUDENTS WITH SEN



An Chomhairle Náisiúnta
um Oideachas Speisialta
National Council
for Special Education

Paths, Tracks, Gaps and Cliffs: The Post-School Transitions of Students with Special Educational Needs

Selina McCoy, Keyu Ye and Eamonn Carroll
Economic and Social Research Institute



The NCSE report Paths, Tracks, Gaps and Cliffs highlights the varied post-school transitions experienced by students with special educational needs and identifies a number of systemic challenges that can affect transition planning. While many students engage positively with school, the research points to differences in how transition supports and information about post-school pathways are accessed, particularly for students with more complex needs or those facing additional barriers. Uneven awareness of options beyond traditional academic routes is presented as a broader system issue, shaped by factors such as availability of supports, timing of planning and access to services beyond school.

For guidance counsellors, the findings reinforce the value of early, personalised and relationship-based guidance counselling as a protective and enabling factor within this wider system. Students place high value on one-to-one guidance that supports informed decision-making, builds self-advocacy and sustains high expectations for all learners. The report affirms the central role of guidance counselling in helping students and families navigate complex systems, broaden awareness of pathways and support equitable, inclusive transitions for students with SEN.

Recent reflections from the Department of Education Inspectorate, as outlined in Chapter 8 of the Inspectorate's 2021–2023 report and Thematic Review (DE, 2024), emphasise that inclusion is a whole-school responsibility, grounded in the belief that every young person should feel welcomed, supported and enabled to progress.

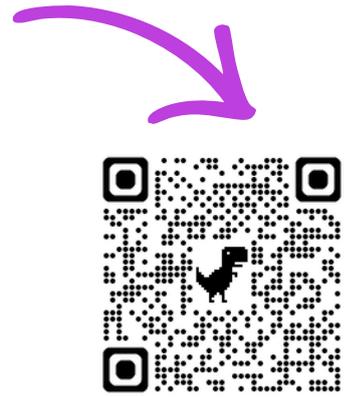
Inclusion is understood not as a fixed state, but as an ongoing, reflective process that values diversity, builds belonging and actively removes barriers to participation across education and pathways.

For guidance counsellors, this affirms the central role of inclusive guidance practice in making all pathways visible and valued. Through equitable access to information, supportive relationships and informed decision-making, guidance supports students from diverse backgrounds to recognise their strengths, explore options at their own pace, and navigate pathways aligned with their aspirations, wellbeing and lived experience.



INCLUSIVE GUIDANCE PRACTICE FOR STUDENTS WITH SEN

WALK PEER Programme - Bridging the Gap



WALK PEER – Providing Equal Employment Routes

WALK PEER is a supported Transition programme collaborating with partner schools to support school leavers, with additional educational needs, to bridge the gap to mainstream further education, training and employment.

Careers & Employment Facilitators (CEF) work with students in their final two years of school to develop ambitious and sustainable post school transition plans. For those students who choose to transition to mainstream further education, training, and/or employment the CEF continues mentoring and supporting them for three years after school.

The Inclusive Pathways Audit Reflection Tool, included in the Professional Resource Pack which accompanied our professional learning day on Pathways this year, is designed to support guidance counsellors in reviewing how effectively current guidance programmes and whole-school guidance plans promote inclusive access to a full range of learning and progression pathways.

The tool provides structured prompts to help identify strengths, gaps, and opportunities for improvement across student groups and programme areas.

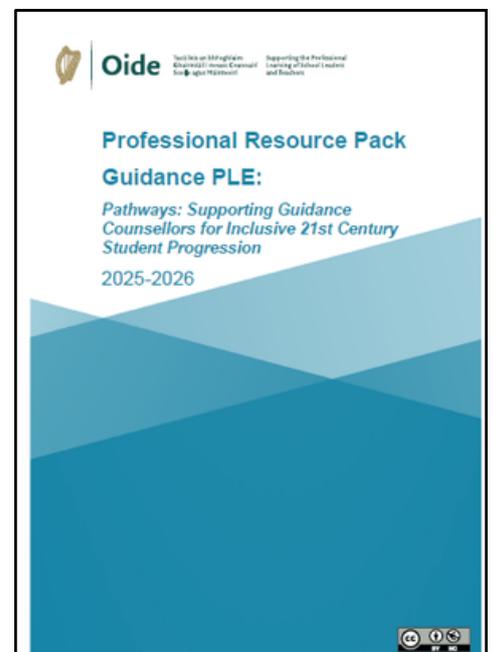
By supporting collaborative reflection and priority-setting, the audit enables guidance counsellors and whole-school guidance teams to take small, realistic actions that strengthen equity, student voice, and pathway visibility. It is intended as a practical planning support that can be revisited over time to inform sustainable, school-specific enhancement of inclusive guidance practice.

Oide
Inclusive Pathways Audit Reflection Tool

Purpose: To help review how well guidance programmes and whole-school guidance (WSG) plans support inclusive, equitable access to a variety of pathways for all students.

Step 1: Snapshot of Current Practice
Complete as a team or individually. Tick or briefly describe current strengths.

Area	Guiding Questions	Current Practice (Examples or Comments)
Pathway Visibility	Are all students informed about the full range of post-school options (e.g. FET, HE, apprenticeship, work, gap year...)?	
Inclusivity of Representation	Are role models, alumni or guests from diverse backgrounds and pathways included in whole school guidance?	
Access to Experiences	Do all students have equitable access to career events, TV work experience, or employer engagement?	
Digital Skills Use	What range of digital tools/platforms do students use to explore pathways?	
Literacy and Numeracy	How are literacy and numeracy integrated into guidance learning?	
Student Voice	How is student feedback on pathways education gathered and used to inform WSG planning?	
21st Century Skills	How are students actively supported to identify and reflect on their own 21st century skills—and to connect these skills with their future goals and progression routes?	



SUPPORTING PATHWAY CHOICE FOR UKRAINIAN STUDENTS 2025 -26



Guidance counsellors play a key role in supporting Ukrainian students as they explore and plan progression pathways beyond post-primary education. Many students are navigating a new education system while also adapting to cultural, social and language transitions. Providing clear, supportive and informed guidance helps students and families understand available opportunities and make confident decisions about their future

CURRENT PROVISION: SUPPORTING ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION 2025-26

The Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science provided Temporary Tuition Fee Supports for eligible Ukrainian students with Temporary Protection who are progressing to, or starting, higher education in Ireland in 2025/26.

Who is Supported?

Students Progressing in Their Studies:

Students who are progressing to the next year of their approved full-time course may continue to receive funding.

New Undergraduate Students

Students may qualify if they:

- Are entering undergraduate higher education in 2025/26
- Received Temporary Protection within the last 3 years
- Completed the Leaving Certificate (or equivalent) in 2025
- Have lived in Ireland for at least six months before 1st October 2025

Alternative Support:

Students with Temporary Protections longer than 3 years may apply through the Free Fees Scheme or SUSI Student Grant.

WHAT DOES THE SUPPORT COVER?

Undergraduate Courses

- Full EU tuition fees (including student contribution where applicable)
- Fees are paid directly to the higher education institution
- Some students also received a financial stipend to support living and travel costs.

Postgraduate Courses

- Tuition fees up to €6,270
- Available only to students progressing within postgraduate study (new postgraduate entrants are not eligible)

Important Eligibility Conditions

Students must:

- Hold Temporary Protection under Section 60 of the International Protection Act
- Be living in Ireland and attending an approved full-time course
- Be enrolled in only one approved course at a time

Students are generally not eligible if they:

- Already hold a Level 8 or postgraduate qualification
- Are repeating a year of study
- Are new postgraduate entrants under this scheme

(Some students progressing from Level 6 or Level 7 to a related Level 8 course may still qualify.)

Duration of the Scheme

This tuition support applies to the 2025/26 academic year only. Eligibility is reviewed each year and continuation of funding is not guaranteed.

SUPPORTING PATHWAY CHOICE FOR UKRAINIAN STUDENTS 2025 -26

PLC courses offer valuable progression opportunities and are often a strong pathway for Ukrainian students. These programmes provide practical, skills based learning and can support progression to employment, apprenticeships or higher education.

Guidance counsellors can support students to explore PLC options aligned with their interests and strengths, while also providing information on available bursary supports. Eligible students may access financial supports depending on their circumstances, including bursaries for new entrants and students progressing within PLC programmes



CURRENT PROVISION: SUPPORTING ACCESS TO FURTHER EDUCATION (PLC) 2025 -26

Ukrainian students with Temporary Protection can access financial supports to participate in Post-Leaving Certificate (PLC) courses 2025/26.

The PLC Bursary for Displaced Persons (Ukraine) supports eligible students who:

- Hold Temporary Protection under Section 60 of the International Protection Act
- Are enrolling in or progressing within an approved full-time PLC course
- Have not previously received funding for a course at the same qualification level
- Are studying through an Education and Training Board (ETB)

Alternative Support:

Students whose Temporary Protection was granted more than three years ago, may apply for maintenance supports through SUSI.

WHAT FINANCIAL SUPPORTS ARE AVAILABLE?

Students Progressing to Year 2

- Eligible to receive a bursary of €6,115

New PLC Students

Funding is based on distance from the education centre:

- €6,115 – Students living 30km or more from their college
- €2,575 – Students living less than 30km from their college

Students whose living arrangements change during the academic year may apply to have their bursary reassessed.

Important Eligibility Conditions

- Funding supports students progressing in their education and training journey
- Students who previously enrolled in a PLC course but withdrew early may need to complete an equivalent period of study before requalifying
- Students must be enrolled in an approved PLC course.

[Click for detailed information from DFHERIS](#)

Duration of the Scheme

Supports apply to 2025/26 academic year only
Temporary Protection currently expected until
March 2026

New supports may change after this date

IGC CONFERENCE 2026 – *NOURISH TO FLOURISH* SUSTAINING GROWTH THROUGH GUIDANCE COUNSELLING

The Oide Guidance Team are delighted to be contributing to this year's IGC conference from 6th - 7th March in Technological University Dublin, and to have the opportunity to work with guidance colleagues from across the country.

Guidance Policy and Practice Workshop: Guidance Inspector, Guidance Unit and Oide Guidance

This workshop will be co-facilitated by members of the Department of Education and Youth Guidance team and the Oide Guidance team. A short presentation will highlight some key points relating to policy developments; the whole school guidance planning and practice; the benefits of engagement with the Professional Support Programme for Guidance Counsellors in Post-Primary School, PLC & CFE settings (Guidance Counselling Supervision) and professional learning opportunities for guidance counsellors.

Content will include points on the evolving role of the guidance counsellor in collaboration with other members of the school staff, and new programme developments/redevelopments in schools.

The presentation will be followed by an interactive and reflective discussion on any issue relating to whole school guidance and guidance counselling in our contemporary post- primary schools.

Oide Guidance PLE on Supporting the Planning for Junior Cycle Guidance

Oide Guidance Team is pleased to present a workshop for guidance counsellors entitled supporting the Planning for Junior Cycle Guidance. This workshop will support guidance counsellors to navigate the Junior Cycle Guidance landscape by linking Department of Education and Youth policy and current educational research to practical, student-centred planning.

Participants will explore and collaborate on how to identify and prioritise student needs, using these insights to shape their Junior Cycle Guidance programme in their school contexts.

Most importantly, we hope participants will leave with increased confidence in articulating the purpose of Junior Cycle Guidance, strengthened connections with colleagues, and practical ideas that can support whole-school guidance planning and practice in their own contexts.

Registration for workshops is available through the IGC Membership Portal - [Members Portal](#)

IGC
INSTITUTE OF
GUIDANCE
COUNSELLORS



Oide



Whole-school Guidance: PLE for Senior School Leaders

The Oide Guidance Team presents an online webinar on **whole-school guidance for senior school leaders**. This webinar is open to all principals and deputy principals in post-primary schools. This webinar offers participants an opportunity to:



- Develop a clear understanding of the purpose and value of whole-school guidance within the school community
- Explore how whole-school guidance is reflected in national policy and leadership practice
- Identify practical ways to plan, review and strengthen sustainable whole-school guidance in response to student needs.

Guidance in Transition Year: PLE for Guidance Counsellors

The Oide Guidance Team presents an online webinar on **Guidance in Transition Year**. This webinar is open to all guidance counsellors, whole-school guidance teams and registered teachers. This webinar offers participants an opportunity to:

- Discover how the TY Programme Statement 2024 supports career guidance and holistic student development
- Explore engaging and practical ways to support students' career exploration during Transition Year
- Connect the rich learning opportunities within TY to strengthen guidance planning and practice.

Title	Date and Time	Venue
Whole-school Guidance: PLE for Senior School Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wednesday, 22nd April, 2026, 11.15am-12:30pm (English). • An Aoine, 24 Aibreán, 2026, 11:15r.n-12:30i.n (Gaeilge). 	Online via Zoom
Guidance in Transition Year: PLE for Guidance Counsellors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday, 28th April, 2026, 2.15pm-3:30pm (English). • An Mháirt, 5 Bealtaine, 2026, 11:15r.n-12:30i.n (Gaeilge) 	Online via Zoom



Please scan the **QR Code** or click the link to **'Book Now.'** When accessing the booking system, please filter your search by selecting **'Guidance'** to easily locate the booking options.

Alternatively you can book online at: <https://oide.ie/apply-book-now/teachers/>

BOOK NOW





SUSTAINING INCLUSIVE GUIDANCE PRACTICE

School support for guidance can be requested through your Principal which can include a visit to your school and/or sustained support.

Our **Oide Guidance website** has a growing repository of resources and supports.

Please follow us on X at **Oide_Guidance**.



Whole-school guidance is a living, evolving practice. It is strengthened through shared understanding, reflective practice, and a sustained commitment to equity and inclusion across the school community.

As this edition has highlighted, inclusive guidance is built through everyday professional judgement, careful listening, and relationships that support students to see themselves and their futures with confidence. This work requires time, emotional labour and deep professional care, and so we encourage guidance counsellors to take space to rest, reflect and attend to their own wellbeing, recognising that sustained, high-quality guidance practice depends on the wellbeing of those who provide it.

We hope this issue has offered practical insights, reassurance, and renewed energy to support inclusive guidance practice in your school context. We look forward to continuing to work alongside you in the months ahead.

Oide Guidance Team,
Joanne, Ginéad and Niamh

Oide Guidance Newsletter

