



## MONAGHAN EDUCATION CENTRE

### INFORMATION FOR SUPERVISORS and GUIDANCE COUNSELLORS

#### THE ORGANISATION OF THE SUPERVISION PROGRAMME FOR POST-PRIMARY GUIDANCE COUNSELLORS DURING SCHOOL CLOSURES AS A RESULT OF COVID-19

##### **Guidance Counselling Supervision - Context**

The Department of Education and Skills (DES) funds the Professional Support (Supervision) Programme for post-primary guidance counsellors. The programme provides five supervision sessions during the school year for groups across the country. Monaghan Education Centre (MEC) manages and provides administrative support to the provision of the supervision programme on behalf of the Department. Supervision groups are co-ordinated through the branch network of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC). The supervision steering group, chaired by the Department, oversees the development and delivery of the supervision programme. Members of this group include representatives of DES, MEC, NAPD, NCGE, IGC and Guidance Counselling Supervisors.

##### **School Closures**

The Minister for Education and Skills Joe Mc Hugh TD has announced that schools will remain closed until at least 19 April 2020, as part of national measures to tackle the spread of the Covid-19 virus. The Minister has also advised of steps taken by the Department to minimise the impact of the current school closures on teaching, learning and student supports. All schools have been asked where possible, to provide online resources and supports for students where schools are equipped to do so.

Recent surveys conducted by both NCGE and IGC confirm that guidance counsellors would like to continue to provide guidance counselling online to students. In the NCGE survey, guidance counsellors indicated that they would like to continue with conference calls to their school's student support team in relation to referrals and ongoing contact with their colleagues from their supervision groups. As some guidance counsellors will continue to provide online guidance counselling to students, the Department will continue to facilitate guidance counselling supervision to support them in their work.

##### **Guidelines**

Guidelines on best practice in relation to providing guidance counselling remotely have recently been published by the Department. A video presentation on best practice in relation to one-to-one guidance counselling online will also be uploaded shortly to the websites of NCGE and IGC.

##### **Supervision for Guidance Counsellors during Covid-19**

Supervision groups can no longer physically meet because of public health advice and the requirements of social distancing during the Covid-19 pandemic. In order to play our part and support each other in these difficult times, the following is recommended:

Members of each supervision group at local level should decide, in consultation with their supervisor, if they would like to hold their next supervision meetings remotely, using one of

the many online platforms available. It is recommended that each supervision group appoints one member who is comfortable with the use of information and communications technology (ICT) to take the lead in setting up the online system. Where members of the group decide to proceed with such an online group session, however small, payments for such supervision will be processed in the normal way by Monaghan Education Centre.

The supervision steering committee does not recommend any particular online platform. Monaghan Education Centre will provide technical advice on how these remote meetings can be held, if assistance is required.

This is a very challenging time for schools, guidance counsellors, students, parents and the wider community. It is critical that during these difficult times we continue to consult, refer and work together and that the focus of all is on the best possible outcomes for our students.

The guidance provided by the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) for parents, for young people and for teachers is being updated on an ongoing basis, and is available at [www.education.ie/covid19](http://www.education.ie/covid19).

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to extend our appreciation to all supervisors and guidance counsellors for their dedication and commitment to supporting students throughout the year, and especially in these challenging times. It is very much appreciated.

David McCague,  
Director,  
Monaghan Education Centre