
4: APPROACHES TO DESIGN

Contents

I. Action Planning	2
II. Writing the Plan	3
⇒ Action Plan Formats	3
□ Narrative Style: Sample	5
□ Pro-Forma Style: Samples	7
□ Action Plan Templates	9
III. Writing Policies	16
⇒ Procedural Model for Policy Formulation	17
⇒ Equality Proofing	18
⇒ Framework for School Policies	19
□ Sample Policy Statement:	20
□ Policy Statement Pro-Forma	23
IV. Notes	26
□	

4 : APPROACHES TO DESIGN

The outcome of the Review stage is a series of decisions about the school's development priorities for the period of the current planning cycle. These priorities can be expressed as strategic goals

Decisions are ineffectual unless they are acted on. The purpose of the Design stage is to enable the school community to plan how to translate its strategic decisions into action.

The Design stage involves:

- ◆ **Action Planning (Operational Planning):** constructing detailed Action Plans that specify what precisely is to be done to secure progress towards each goal
- ◆ **Writing the plan:** designing the structure of the overall School Plan and drafting and compiling its component sections

I. ACTION PLANNING

Action Planning is a process that enables schools: to identify precisely what they want or need to achieve in relation to each priority; to plan and document a course of action to achieve it; and to provide for monitoring and evaluation so that practice can be modified in the light of experience.

The stages of the Action Planning process are summarised in the document, *School Development Planning: An Introduction for Second Level Schools*, and in **Unit 2** of these Guidelines.

An Action Plan focuses on a particular priority. In relation to that priority, it specifies:

- ◆ **Targets:** what is to be achieved; the objectives
- ◆ **Tasks:** the actual jobs that are to be done to attain the targets
- ◆ **Resources:** human, financial, organisational, and physical resources needed for implementation
- ◆ **Remits:** who is to do what
- ◆ **Time-frames:** when the actual jobs will be done; the deadline by which tasks will be accomplished
- ◆ **Success criteria:** the outcomes that will indicate that the plan is achieving or has achieved its objectives
- ◆ **Monitoring and evaluation procedures**

Detailed guidelines on success criteria, monitoring and evaluation are provided in **Unit 5**.

What is needed to develop an Action Plan? The development of an Action Plan necessitates:

- ◆ **A Task Group or Planning Team, with a Co-ordinator,** to undertake the planning
- ◆ **Agreed procedures for team-working**
- ◆ **Time** for planning meetings, consultation and communication
- ◆ **Information** on relevant factors
- ◆ **Support and co-operation** of Principal and staff for the Task Group
- ◆ **Agreed consultation and communication procedures** throughout the development process to ensure widespread acceptance of the finished Action Plan.

II. WRITING THE PLAN

1. Designing the Overall Structure

The booklet, *School Development Planning: An Introduction for Second Level Schools* offers general guidelines on the structure, format and content of the School Plan.

The key consideration in designing and writing the School Plan is that it is to be a **working document**. So, it must be easy to read, easy to follow, and laid out in such a way that items of content are easy to find.

To ensure consistency in style and layout, or compatibility between different sections, it is useful to agree certain features of the documentation at a very early stage of the planning process. These might include:

- ◆ **Standard layouts or templates for all Action Plans or all Policies**
- ◆ **Standard format –page-size, margins, font-style, font-size, heading and sub-heading-styles—throughout the document**
- ◆ **Word-processing of all sections on the same software package, to facilitate compilation and editing**

It may be helpful to appoint an Editor or Editorial Team at the outset to edit the final draft of the School Plan.

2. Drafting Component Sections of the Plan

To facilitate the task of drafting, this section provides sample layouts for two major components of the School Plan: Action Plans and Policies.

Action Plan Formats

An Action Plan can be laid out in

- ◆ **Narrative style, or**
- ◆ **Pro-forma (chart) style**

The pro-forma style has a number of advantages.

- ⇒ It is concise
- ⇒ During the action-planning process, it highlights at a glance what needs or remains to be done to complete the Action Plan
- ⇒ During the implementation process, it facilitates rapid reference and charting of progress by those who are accustomed to it

The major disadvantage of the pro-forma style is that many people find it off-putting. As plan-drafters, they find it too constraining; as plan-readers, they find it confusing. Accordingly, they prefer to draft Action Plans in narrative style, but using a standard set of headings.

Those who reject the pro-forma style during the construction of Action Plans may find it useful as a means of summarising the finished product for display in the Staff Room, in order to heighten awareness and to facilitate checking.

Sample Action Plans to illustrate both the narrative format and the pro-forma (chart) format are provided at the end of this section. A variety of Action Plan Templates is also provided. If they so wish, schools may adapt any of these templates to design a format that they find user-friendly. For further Action Plan samples and templates, see **Unit 5** (Appendix C), **Unit 8** (Section III), **Unit 9** (Section V, Template 7 and Sample) and **Unit 10** (Section III).

It should be noted that:

- ◆ In **each planning cycle**, a school may identify **a number of priorities** that it wishes to address through Action Planning
- ◆ In relation to **each priority**, the school may identify **a number of targets** that it wishes to attain in the current planning cycle
- ◆ In relation to **each target**, the school may identify **a number of tasks** to be done

Therefore, an overview of the school's programme of Action Plans for a particular planning period might be presented thus:

PRIORITIES	TARGETS	TASKS
Priority 1:	Target 1:	Task 1:
		Task 2:
		Task 3:
	Target 2:	Task 1:
		Task 2:
		Task 3:
Priority 2:	Target 1:	Task 1:
		Task 2:
		Task 3:
	Target 2:	Task 1:
		Task 2:
		Task 3:

A template for an Action Plan Programme Summary is provided in the next section of this Unit to assist the school in preparing an overview of its Action Plan Programme for the School Plan.

SAMPLE ACTION PLAN: NARRATIVE FORMAT

PRIORITY: TO ENHANCE THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

TARGET 1: TO INTRODUCE EFFECTIVE LITTER-CONTROL MEASURES

Actions

- ◆ We shall establish a Litter Monitoring Group comprising representatives of teaching staff, support staff and Students' Council to review and document the litter problem in the school, to report on its causes and its prevalence, and to recommend possible practical solutions.

In the course of its work, the Litter Monitoring Group will consult with other schools and with people who are experienced in litter control, litter recycling and litter disposal.

The Litter Monitoring Group will complete its initial review during the Autumn term and present its report and recommendations at the January staff meeting.

The January staff meeting will decide on follow-up action.

- ◆ Year Heads will invite the local Litter Warden to inspect the school and to address each year group before Easter. Class tutors will hold preparatory and follow-up discussions with their classes to heighten awareness of the litter problem.
- ◆ The Art Department will organise an annual Poster Competition on the theme of litter control. Entries will be displayed in the school in rotation and prizes will be awarded in May.
- ◆ The School Environmental Officer (Assistant Principal) will organise a Tidy Classroom Competition, for which prizes will be awarded annually, in co-operation with class tutors. A rota of classroom inspections will be drawn up. A marking scheme will be devised. Prizes will be awarded in May.
- ◆ The LCVP Class, as part of their course, will prepare a video on Litter during the current school year, under the direction of the LCVP Co-ordinator. This video will be shown to Junior pupils during CSPE and SPHE classes.
- ◆ The Transition Year class, under the direction of the Transition Year Programme Team, will include litter control in their project to enhance the school grounds

Resources

- ◆ Litter Monitoring Group will require substitute cover for teacher members for 2 x 45 minute meetings; stationery, postage and telephone costs; secretarial time to help with correspondence; caretaker time; travel expenses for visit to recycling plant.

The implementation of LMG recommendations will probably require resources which are not quantifiable at this stage

- ◆ Art Department will require supplementary art materials, display facilities and money to buy prizes and prepare certificates of merit.
- ◆ School Environmental Officer will require money to buy prizes and secretarial or Art Department assistance to prepare certificates of merit.
- ◆ LCVP Department will require outside expertise to advise on video production, supplies for video camera, and substitute cover for Co-ordinator on the day of the final shoot
- ◆ Transition Year Team will require access to litter collection equipment, overalls and supplies of rubber gloves and litter sacks.

Success Criteria

- ◆ Recommendations of Litter Monitoring Group enable staff to decide on realistic and effective courses of action to control litter
- ◆ Art Department Competition gets high profile, attracts large entry, produces eye-catching posters
- ◆ Tidy Classroom Competition marks suggest students have been motivated to maintain effort
- ◆ LCVP class complete and show video
- ◆ TY class complete environmental project
- ◆ Litter Monitoring Group's end-of-plan litter review reveals less litter than initial review.

Monitoring Procedures

- ◆ Litter Monitoring Group will conduct ongoing monitoring of litter and will draw problem areas to attention of relevant class-tutors/Year Heads

Litter Monitoring Group will give brief progress report to staff once per term

- ◆ Year Heads will organise periodic surprise Litter Patrols and record findings
- ◆ Class teachers will monitor classrooms on an ongoing basis

Evaluation Procedures

The evaluation will take place during the summer term of the year xxxx.

- ◆ Litter Monitoring Group will conduct end-of-plan review and apply success criteria to evaluate overall outcome
- ◆ Litter Monitoring Group will survey views and experiences of staff, pupils and Parents' Council re litter in the school
- ◆ Litter Warden will be invited to inspect the school and report findings
- ◆ Litter Monitoring Group will prepare its final report and recommendations
- ◆ The report will be discussed at a Staff Meeting and decisions will be made on future action.

PRIORITY: TO IMPROVE STUDENT BEHAVIOUR			
TARGET 1:	TO IMPROVE OVERALL ATTENDANCE BY 5%	Responsibility: Deputy Principal	SUCCESS CRITERIA: TARGET 1
TASKS	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES
1. Improve Roll-Call Follow-up ⇒ Check absences from every lesson ⇒ Analyse Absentee Lists, note patterns ⇒ Conduct truancy spot-checks ⇒ Interview chronic absentees	All Staff Ms. Jones, A.P. Year Heads Class tutors	From September xx	Teachers' Journals Computer, teacher-time secretarial time, telephone
2. Heighten Student Awareness of Value of Good Attendance ⇒ Introduce Award Scheme for good Attendance ⇒ Arrange talks on attendance by business Persons ⇒ Show students sample references	Year Heads Guidance Counsellor Principal	By Easter xx Autumn term Spring term	MONITORING PROCEDURES 1. Year Heads review absence figures monthly & discuss chronic cases for further action 2. D.P. monitors staff checking procedures 3. Task Group meets once per term to consider feedback collected from staff, pupils, parents
3. Involve Parents in Promoting Attendance ⇒ Produce standard letters for parents of chronic absentees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Notice of problem ▪ Requesting meeting ⇒ Produce newsletter for parents on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Importance of attendance ▪ School procedures re issue ▪ Dangers of truancy ⇒ Arrange talk for Parents' Association on attendance issues	Deputy Principal Principal, Year Heads & Guidance Counsellor Teacher Rep. On Parents' Council	By September xx By Christmas xx By Easter xx	EVALUATION PROCEDURES 1. Task Group analyses absence figures, applies success criteria to evaluate overall outcome 2. Task group surveys pupil & parent opinion to evaluate attitudes, outcomes of Tasks 2 & 3 3. Task Group surveys staff to evaluate appropriateness of Task 1 procedures 4. Task Group reports, with recommendations 5. Whole staff discuss Task Group report, decide on follow-up
4. Contact Business Community ⇒ Brief employers on attendance issue ⇒ Seek co-operation re part-time jobs	Principal	September April	EVALUATION PERIOD May-September xxxx

PRIORITY: TO ENHANCE THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Plan Period: xxxx xxxx

TARGET 1: TO INTRODUCE EFFECTIVE LITTER CONTROL MEASURES

Evaluation: Summer Term xxxx

TASKS	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES	SUCCESS CRITERIA
<p>1. Establish Litter Monitoring Group representative of teachers, support staff, Parents' Council and Students' Council</p>	Principal with the four constituencies	September	Meeting time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review identifies effective action plans to control litter Poster competition attracts large entry and produces eye-catching posters Tidy Classroom competition motivates student effort LCVP class complete and show video TY class complete project Litter Monitoring Group's end-of-plan litter review reveals less litter <p>MONITORING PROCEDURES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Litter Monitoring Group monitor litter and highlight problem areas LMG report to staff on progress once per term Year Heads organise periodic Litter Patrols and record findings Class Tutors monitor classrooms on an ongoing basis <p>EVALUATION PROCEDURES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LMG apply success criteria LMG survey school community Litter Warden inspects & reports LMG prepare final report & recommendations Staff discuss LMG report and decide on future actions
<p>2. Review litter problem in school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research causes and prevalence Consult other schools Consult experts in litter control Research litter recycling Research litter disposal Recommend solutions Present report for consideration Prepare Action Plan to implement agreed recommendations 	Litter Monitoring Group (LMG)	Autumn Term January By May	Stationery, postage & telephone, Secretarial time Caretaker time Substitution cover for teacher time Travel expenses to recycling plant	
<p>3. Heighten student awareness of need for litter control</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite Litter Warden to address each Year Group Hold class discussions before and after Litter Warden's visit Organise poster competition on Litter control Organise Tidy Classroom competition Prepare school video on Litter Show video to SPHE/CSPE classes Include Litter Control in TY project to enhance school grounds 	Year Heads Class Tutors Art Department Environmental Officer (A. P.) LCVP Class and Coordinator LCVP Class & Subject Teachers Transition Year Class & Coordination Team	By Easter By Easter To end in May Sept.—May Sept.—March April Sept.—May	Art and display materials Prizes and certificates Prizes and Art. Department help with certificates Expert advice on video production Video camera supplies Coordinator time Litter collection equipment—overalls, rubber gloves, litter sacks	

ACTION PLAN TEMPLATE 2

PRIORITY:				
What to we want to achieve?				
TARGET:				
What needs to be done? (TASKS)	When? (TIMEFRAME)	Who? (REMITS)	What resources? (RESOURCES)	Desired Outcomes? (SUCCESS CRITERIA)
AGREED MONITORING PROCEDURES :		AGREED EVALUATION PROCEDURES :		

ACTION PLAN TEMPLATE 3 (Page 1)

PRIORITY:				
TARGET:				
TASKS	WHEN?	WHO?	RESOURCES	SUCCESS CRITERIA (Implementation)

ACTION PLAN TEMPLATE 3 (Page 2)

SUCCESS CRITERIA (Outcomes—Impact on Teaching and Learning):

MONITORING PROCEDURES:

EVALUATION PROCEDURES:

ACTION PLAN TEMPLATE 4

PRIORITY:	
Steps	Our Plan
What do we want to achieve?	
What could we do to achieve it? (List tasks and activities)	
Who will do what?	
When will each task be done?	
What resources do we need?	
How will we know if our plan has worked?	

SUMMARY OF SCHOOL'S ACTION PLAN PROGRAMME: TEMPLATE 1

OVERVIEW OF ACTION PLAN PROGRAMME FOR SCHOOL PLAN PERIOD:			
PRIORITIES	TARGETS	TASKS	TIMEFRAME
Priority No: Development Area:	Target 1.	Task 1.	
		Task 2.	
		Task 3.	
	Target 2.	Task 1.	
		Task 2.	
		Task 3.	
Priority No: Development Area:	Target 1.	Task 1.	
		Task 2.	
		Task 3.	
	Target 2.	Task 1.	
		Task 2.	
		Task 3.	

SUMMARY OF ACTION PLAN PROGRAMME: TEMPLATE 2

OVERVIEW OF ACTION PLAN PROGRAMME FOR SCHOOL PLAN PERIOD:			
PRIORITIES	TARGETS	TASKS	Timeframe
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			

III. WRITING POLICIES

Why Formulate Policy?

1. Policy provides the framework for planning.
2. A policy serves essentially as a guideline for dealing with a recurring issue. A clear policy statement promotes consistency, reduces uncertainty, and deters ad-hoc decision-making.
3. A clear policy is an effective time-saving device. It enables matters that come within its ambit to be dealt with speedily, without prolonged discussion.
4. A policy statement is a resource and a support for schools in dealing with difficult situations. It is a protection for the Board of Management and staff.
5. Written policy serves as a reference point for pupils, parents and teachers. It promotes harmony by clarifying procedures, expectations, and roles.
6. The involvement of parents and pupils in policy-formulation, where appropriate, promotes partnership.
7. Under the Education Act 1998, the school has a statutory obligation to formulate policy on certain issues and the Board of Management has a statutory obligation to publish the school's policy on those issues. (See *School Development Planning: An Introduction for Second Level Schools*, Appendix 1)
8. By formulating and publishing policies, the school is meeting criteria of openness, transparency and accountability

Characteristics of an Effective Policy Statement

1. It is clearly structured, concise and specific, and written in jargon-free language
2. It is consistent with the school's statement of mission, vision and aims
3. It presents a clear framework of intentions that indicate what is required of the implementers
4. It has a clearly planned and phased action programme that identifies how it will be implemented
5. It provides unambiguous direction and guidance but leaves room for professional judgement
6. It outlines how the policy will be monitored
7. It is the product of collaboration and consultation
8. It is owned by the staff and evident in practice
9. It is made accessible to all interested parties

PROCEDURAL MODEL FOR POLICY FORMULATION

1. Initial Review by Staff Meeting

- ⇒ **Specify policy issue on the Agenda**
- ⇒ **Review the current situation** with respect to this issue:
 - Is there a policy?
 - If so, is it working? What are its strengths and weaknesses?
 - What changes are necessary?

 - If there is no policy, what needs should a new policy address?
- ⇒ **Establish structures to advance the process of policy formulation**
 - Choose a Co-ordinator for the process
 - Establish a Task Group to work on the policy issue

2. Development by Task Group

- ⇒ **Establish a rationale for the policy**
 - Why does the school need policy on this issue?
 - What benefits would a policy offer?
- ⇒ **Collect and analyse relevant data: research and consult**
 - Current situation in the school re this issue: the facts
 - Views and expectations of teachers, parents, pupils re this issue
 - Situation / policy in other schools
 - Governmental regulations and guidelines
 - Equality issues
 - Advice of professional associations & educationalists with relevant expertise
- ⇒ **Decide on the main provisions of the policy**, based on outcomes of research and consultation
- ⇒ **Prepare a draft policy for discussion**, bearing in mind:
 - The Characteristics of an Effective Policy Statement (above) and
 - The Framework for Formulating School Policies (to follow)
 - Equality Proofing (see below)
- ⇒ **Evaluate and revise the draft**
 - Consult widely with staff, stakeholders, parties with relevant expertise
 - Identify potential problems and amend the draft to address them

3. Ratification and Dissemination

- ⇒ **Present the revised draft to the whole staff** for acceptance, following amendment, if necessary
- ⇒ **Present agreed draft to the Board of Management for ratification**, following further amendment, if necessary
- ⇒ **Communicate the agreed policy** to all interested parties, especially pupils and parents:
 - Explain the rationale for the policy
 - Explain how the policy will work
 - Explain the benefits of the policy

4. Implementation, Monitoring and Review

- ⇒ **Set a date or schedule for implementation**
 - Allow time for preparation, if necessary
 - Consider phased implementation if appropriate
- ⇒ **Monitor the implementation** in accordance with procedures specified in the policy statement, focusing on:
 - Whether the policy is being implemented
 - Whether the implementation is producing the desired effects
- ⇒ **Review the policy after a fixed period** in accordance with procedures specified in the policy statement, and revise it if necessary

EQUALITY PROOFING

The Education Act 1998 requires that the school address issues of equality of access and participation. To meet this requirement, it is not sufficient that the school develop an isolated policy on equality. Rather, concern for equality should be incorporated into the school's basic philosophy, as enunciated in its statement of mission, vision and aims, so that it permeates all aspects of school policy and planning.

Accordingly, all policies should be "equality-proofed", that is, concern for equality should be integrated into them or woven through them.

Equality proofing a policy involves:

- ◆ **Incorporating equality criteria into the formulation process at the Design stage**
 - ⇒ Ensuring the initial research process addresses equality issues and consults with relevant special needs groups to ascertain their views
 - ⇒ Considering how the proposed goals or objectives of the policy contribute to the promotion of equality of access, participation and benefit
 - ⇒ Assessing the differential impact that the policy may have on particular groups and ensuring that the policy encompasses the needs of those groups
 - ⇒ Ensuring that the success criteria of the policy are compatible with the equality criteria
 - ⇒ Involving representatives of particular special needs groups in the design of the policy, where appropriate
- ◆ **Incorporating equality criteria into the consultation process**
 - ⇒ Ensuring that the consultation process on the draft policy seeks responses from representatives of all relevant groups
 - ⇒ Adopting forms of consultation that encourage participation by minority groups, who may find formal meetings and documents forbidding
- ◆ **Incorporating equality criteria into the implementation process**
 - ⇒ Applying the policy fairly, while recognising that equality does not mean treating all students the same
- ◆ **Incorporating equality criteria into the monitoring process**
 - ⇒ Monitoring the differential impact of the policy, taking note of particular inequalities that need to be addressed
 - ⇒ Involving representatives of particular groups in the monitoring process, where appropriate
- ◆ **Incorporating equality criteria into the review process**

- ⇒ Collecting reliable data on the impact of the policy on particular groups in order to evaluate its differential effect
- ⇒ Ensuring that the views and experiences of particular groups are researched and taken into consideration in evaluating the success of the policy

FRAMEWORK FOR SCHOOL POLICIES

The following framework is offered as a guide to facilitate the drafting of policy statements. Its purpose is to focus thought and to indicate the range of considerations that a statement might encompass. It is not a prescription.

The framework envisages that a well-formulated policy statement would:

- ◆ **Name** the policy issue or aspect of school life to which it relates
- ◆ Specify the **scope** of the policy—whole-school, departmental, subject-area
- ◆ Be clearly related to the school's statement of **mission, vision and aims**
- ◆ Provide a **rationale** for the policy
- ◆ Specify the **goals** or objectives of the policy
- ◆ Specify the **content** of the policy
- ◆ Specify the **roles and responsibilities** of all who are involved in developing, implementing, monitoring and reviewing policy in this area of school life
- ◆ Specify **success criteria** by which the effectiveness of the policy will be gauged
- ◆ Specify **monitoring** personnel and procedures
- ◆ Specify **review** personnel and procedures
- ◆ Specify a **time-frame** for the review of the policy

These indicators can serve as headings to structure a policy-statement.

It should be noted that the policy-content comprises general guidelines on an issue. It must be followed by a detailed implementation programme or Action Plan to ensure that the content is reflected in practice.

The following sample policy statement demonstrates the use of the framework. It includes a section on implementation that can serve as the basis for an Action Plan.

SAMPLE POLICY STATEMENT

WHOLE SCHOOL POLICY ON HOMEWORK

This policy is rooted in the school's fundamental aim to foster in students a spirit of self-reliance, independence, co-operation and responsibility and to provide them with skills for life-long learning.

RATIONALE

Regular homework is a valuable aspect of the learning process and contributes to the development of sound study skills. It consolidates and supplements the work done in class and promotes independent learning and creativity.

GOALS

- ◆ To ensure consistent approaches to the setting and reviewing of homework across the school
- ◆ To ensure an equitable distribution of study-time for each subject
- ◆ To reduce pressure on students from homework overload
- ◆ To promote the development by students of good study habits and effective study skills
- ◆ To enable students to develop a capacity to organise their own work
- ◆ To enhance the academic achievements of students
- ◆ To encourage parents to take an interest in and to share responsibility for their children's work and progress

POLICY CONTENT

- ◆ Each student will be assigned homework in 3-4 subject areas each night
- ◆ The amount of homework given in each subject area will be specified and agreed by staff
- ◆ Homework will be monitored to ensure that students are not overloaded
- ◆ A rough time guide will be suggested for each year group
- ◆ A balance will be maintained between written/practical work and oral/learning work
- ◆ Teachers will correct homework and give feedback to students
- ◆ A minimum number of essays per language per year will be agreed for each year group
- ◆ Special consideration will be given to students with special educational needs
- ◆ Homework set will be purposeful and meaningful to the work of the class or to some future work
- ◆ Students will be given specific training in homework/study skills
- ◆ Parents will be informed when students do not carry out set homework tasks and detention may be arranged to enable the student to complete the work under supervision
- ◆ Extended exercises will form part of an on-going assessment of each student
- ◆ Records of homework, grades and comments will be kept by each teacher.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Board of Management

- ◆ To ensure that the policy is developed and evaluated from time to time
- ◆ To approve the policy
- ◆ To consider reports from the Principal on the implementation of the policy

Principal, Deputy Principal and Year Heads

- ◆ To establish structures and procedures for the implementation of the policy
- ◆ To monitor the implementation of the policy

Subject Teachers

- ◆ To implement the policy, review homework assignments and provide feedback to students
- ◆ To keep records of homework set
- ◆ To instruct students in homework/study skills

Pastoral Care Personnel (Class Tutors, Guidance and Remedial Personnel)

- ◆ To monitor the effects of the policy and to identify students experiencing difficulty
- ◆ To provide support and guidance, especially for those experiencing difficulty
- ◆ To liaise with subject teachers, especially in relation to consideration for students with special educational needs

Parents are encouraged

- ◆ To support school policy
- ◆ To provide suitable conditions for homework
- ◆ To ensure that the suggested amount of time is spent on homework

Students are required

- ◆ To do homework set, both oral/learning and written/practical
- ◆ To present written homework properly

IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

- ◆ Each Subject Department will develop agreed guidelines on the amount of homework and the balance between written/practical work and oral/learning work that is desirable for each year group
- ◆ Each Subject Department will develop guidelines on the homework/study skills appropriate for that subject
- ◆ Each Language Department will decide on the minimum number of essays per year group per year
- ◆ The Year Head and Class Tutors of each year group, in consultation with the relevant subject teachers, will develop a homework schedule and time guide for the year group
- ◆ The Guidance Counsellor and Remedial Teacher will advise on designing homework for students with special educational needs.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

- ◆ Good quality homework is being presented
- ◆ There is a reduction in the pressure on students in relation to homework
- ◆ Parents and students are satisfied with the effectiveness of the policy
- ◆ The goals are being attained

MONITORING PROCEDURES

- ◆ Class Tutors and Year Heads will conduct on-going monitoring through informal discussion with students and subject teachers, and through homework spot checks, and will note feedback from students, teachers and parents
- ◆ Subject Departments will review implementation once per term
- ◆ Principal and Deputy Principal will meet with Subject Departments, Year Heads, Class Tutors, and Pastoral Care Personnel once per term
- ◆ The Principal will report to the Board of Management once per term

REVIEW PROCEDURES

The policy will be reviewed after two years. The review team will comprise the Principal, Deputy Principal and Year Heads.

- ◆ Views and experiences of teachers, students and parents will be surveyed in relation to the success criteria
- ◆ School records will be analysed to assess impact on students' academic progress
- ◆ The progress of students with special educational needs will be given particular consideration

TIMEFRAME

This policy will come into force on: _____

It will be reviewed after two years.

POLICY STATEMENT PRO-FORMA

TITLE OF POLICY:
SCOPE (whole-school, departmental, subject-area—to whom does the policy apply?):
RELATIONSHIP TO SCHOOL'S MISSION/VISION/AIMS:
RATIONALE (why is the policy necessary?):
GOALS/OBJECTIVES (in precise terms, what is the policy intended to achieve?)
POLICY CONTENT (the provisions of the policy, indicating the school's approach to this policy-area):

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES (what are the responsibilities of the various parties in the school community in the development, implementation and evaluation of this policy?):

SUCCESS CRITERIA (what indicators will be used to gauge the effectiveness of the policy?)

MONITORING PROCEDURES (who will do what when to see how the policy is working?)

REVIEW PROCEDURES (who will do what when to evaluate the effectiveness of the policy and to ascertain what changes, if any, are necessary?):

TIMEFRAME (when will the completed policy be circulated, when will it come into force, when the policy be subject to review?)

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMME:

What detailed procedures are necessary to implement the provisions of this policy?

Who will devise the procedures? When? How will details be circulated to all concerned?

Who will carry out the procedures when they have been devised?

(The Implementation Programme for a Policy is a kind of Action Plan, where the Target is to implement the policy, and the Tasks are the detailed actions necessary to put the policy provisions into practice.)

IV. Notes

1. The section on Action Planning was influenced by: the presentation on Action Planning to the Working Party by Dan Condren and Mary Slattery of Mol an Óige, June 1999; John Yates' presentations at the IDC Facilitators' Training Programme, March 1999; and Education Commission, Conference of Religious of Ireland, "Guidelines for Trustees: School Development Planning", in *The Trusteeship of Catholic Secondary Schools: A handbook for the leaders of religious congregations*
2. The section on Policy-Writing owes much to materials provided by Sr. Patricia Kelly, Mercy Education Office, Tuam