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## **8: STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

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## **8: STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

### **Preamble**

These guidelines are about staff development and teachers. Their purpose is to assist schools in planning for and implementing their own staff development programmes. It is now accepted that a whole-school approach to staff development is useful in the context of School Development Planning. Improvement in schools can happen only with teachers at the centre. Change must focus on teacher growth and development.

This development involves continuous learning. The transformation of schooling and teaching are interconnected. Staff Development for all school staff encourages people to learn about and to work through the change process. Change in schools is about rethinking the curriculum and creating new school structures. Most importantly, it is about supporting a more effective environment for learning and teaching. This requires ongoing Staff Development.

In writing these guidelines we have in mind a whole-school approach to the professional development of teaching staff. This may happen at individual, team, inter-team and whole staff level. The School Development Planning process can provide a forum for this development.

School Development Planning highlights the importance of staff development in two ways.

1. In the review (the first stage of the planning cycle), staff development is often identified as a priority in itself.
2. The action plan for every selected priority area will identify the development and training needed by the staff to address that priority.

**The purpose of this unit is:**

- **to introduce Staff Development in the context of School Planning**
- **to suggest structures within the school to further the process of Staff Development**
- **to outline an approach to planning for Staff Development in the school, using the School Development Planning framework of review, design, implementation and evaluation**
- **to illustrate a framework for a Staff Development Policy**

## I. Staff Development and School Planning

Schools and school communities are constantly engaged in coping with change. In dealing with educational change, there is widespread support for the view that the teacher is the ultimate key. Teachers are constantly faced with new challenges in their professional development. These challenges can be externally generated, from changes in society, national policy on education and school policy development. On the other hand some challenges are personal. Teacher growth must be integrated with school development. The School Development Planning process can assist here.

### Frameworks for integrating Staff and School Development

1. Tuohy (1997) suggests that the SDP process can be viewed as a framework of interrelated levels of participation that enables teachers to relate their **individual** planning to **team** planning, **inter team** planning and **whole school** planning. (See **Unit 7, Section I** of these Guidelines.)

This framework:

- ◆ Aids the process of identifying staff development needs
  - ◆ Encourages the sharing of good practice and the transfer of skills through teacher interaction
2. The basic framework of the SDP process (as outlined in **Unit 2, Section I**) is a useful structure in planning for staff development. It involves:
    - ◆ Reviewing the school's current situation in order to identify staff development needs
    - ◆ Designing a plan to address those needs
    - ◆ Implementing the planned programme of staff development activities
    - ◆ Evaluating the programme to gauge its effectivenessall in the context of the school's mission, vision, and aims.
  3. The School Plan has a key role in promoting staff development. It should provide for activities and initiatives that assist in the professional development of the whole staff.

### Perspectives on Staff Development Needs

In the school context, Staff Development needs can be looked at from a number of perspectives:

- ◆ Personal and interpersonal
- ◆ Structural
- ◆ Career

In the life of the teacher, different career stages have their own unique needs. The staff development plan must address this consideration.

These diverse needs may be summarised as follows:

## Orientations on Staff Development Needs

### ◆ Personal and Professional Development

Teacher growth in terms of self and career is mainly the responsibility of the individual. But professional development is not just a private task. Teacher growth must be integrated into school development. The school must validate and promote personal growth.

### ◆ Levels of Participation

Four levels of participation affect the organisational culture of the school:

- ⇒ **individual**
- ⇒ **team**
- ⇒ **inter-team**
- ⇒ **whole school.**

It is important to define what takes place on each of the four levels and also how the four levels are inter-linked.

This image of organisational levels is useful in understanding overall staff development needs.

### ◆ Career Stages

For each teacher, different stages of career have their own specific needs:

- ⇒ **Pre-service**
- ⇒ **Induction as a New Teacher**
- ⇒ **Early Career**
- ⇒ **Mid-Career**
- ⇒ **Late Career**

At trainee level, the higher diploma student needs on-going support within and outside the school.

The new teacher will need help in fitting into the new workplace. If the new teacher is beginning teaching he or she will need to work on course content and will often focus on discipline.

As a teacher moves through the career, new approaches and attitudes are developed. There is a move through different areas of development in relation to teaching, learning and education. The Staff Development plan must provide a context and opportunities for teachers to develop in these areas.

### For further reading, consult:

Tuohy, D. (1999) *The Inner World of Teaching: Exploring Assumptions*. London: Falmer Press

## **II. Support Structures for Staff Development**

Research shows that teacher development takes place most effectively in a school where there is a culture of collaboration. This feeling of being part of a professional group within the school is important for staff development. Structures must be set up in the school to promote and support effective staff development. Such structures will give teachers an opportunity to talk about teaching.

**Steps that could be taken** to cater for staff development in the school include:

- ◆ the appointment of a staff development convenor
- ◆ the appointment of a staff development committee or action group
- ◆ the provision and development of a staff library
- ◆ the development of an in-service education programme
- ◆ research into courses of study that could be undertaken by staff
- ◆ organisation of school based curriculum days
- ◆ the development of a mentoring programme
- ◆ inviting guest lecturers to speak to staff
- ◆ inviting individual teachers to report to staff on projects or approaches that they have developed, or on key aspects of courses and conferences that they have attended
- ◆ the provision of financial aid for staff development
- ◆ facilitating staff attendance at relevant in-career development or post-graduate degree courses

Schools may address planning and support for Staff Development using a number of activities and structures, such as the following:

- 1. Convenor for Staff Development**
- 2. Staff Development Action Group**
- 3. Curriculum and Programme Teams**
- 4. Reflection on Practice**
- 5. Support from External Providers**

It should be noted, however, that while the school as a whole has a responsibility to develop policies and provide resources for staff development, the individual teacher also has a stake in his or her development and should take some responsibility for it.

### **1. Convenor for Staff Development**

Many schools address the issue of planning for Staff Development by designating a member of staff as Staff Development Convenor. The job-specification of the Staff Development Convenor will vary from school to school and will be governed by a number of factors. A consideration will be whether the school has an Action Group for Staff Development. Where there is an Action Group, the Convenor will work closely with the group in planning for Staff Development.

The role of the Staff Development Convenor may include:

- ◆ **Convening, facilitating and supporting the Action Group for Staff Development**
- ◆ **Communicating information to staff on Staff Development**
- ◆ **Assisting in the identification of Staff Development needs and their prioritisation**
- ◆ **Planning and organising for staff development with In-service and Course providers e.g. Second Level Support Service and other Support Teams at Second Level**
- ◆ **Fostering creative approaches to Staff Development at second level, maybe through sharing and networking with other schools**
- ◆ **Assisting in the design, implementation and evaluation of the Staff Development Plan**
- ◆ **Liaising with the Principal, in-school teams and groups and external supports to ensure that the Staff Development Plan is moving forward**

The support of management is very important in clarifying the Convenor's role, limits of authority, responsibility, status and relationships with staff.

## **2. Staff Development Action Group**

The work of planning for Staff Development is wide-ranging and it may be advisable to appoint an Action Group for Staff Development. This group may be constituted through the School Development Planning process, where action groups are appointed for each priority area. Ideally, the Action Group should include both members of the In-School Management Team and members who are non-post-holders. It is a significant advantage if at least one member of the group has expertise in the area of staff development.

Staff Development Planning is a collaborative process. The role of the Action Group is to involve the whole staff in reviewing Staff Development needs, and, in consultation with the whole staff, to assist in designing, implementing and evaluating a programme to address those needs. Skills in the organisation and facilitation of group discussion, collaborative planning and collective decision-making are an advantage. Accordingly, the work of the Action Group is advanced by skill-development in the following areas:

- ◆ **Teamwork**
- ◆ **Communication**
- ◆ **Organising and managing meetings**
- ◆ **Managing conflict**
- ◆ **Data collection**

The areas of teamwork, communication, organising and managing meetings, and managing conflict are addressed in **Unit 7, Section III**. Data collection is addressed in **Unit 3, Sections II and III**.

### 3. Curriculum and Programme Teams

Many schools now have teams in place to implement aspects of the curriculum and different programmes. Teamwork can serve as an effective means of staff development by encouraging the sharing of good practice, the transfer of skills, and the application of creativity to problem solving. It is useful for teachers to reflect individually on their experiences of team membership and to share their reflections with team colleagues. The following exercise might be undertaken:

<b>Reflection on Team Membership</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. List all the teams that you take part in at school.</li><li>2. In relation to each team that you have listed, consider the following questions:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. As a member of this team, what professional experience and values do you bring to the decisions about teaching and learning?</li><li>b. What experience, knowledge, values and qualities are relevant to inform your decisions?</li><li>c. How does membership of the team benefit your teaching?</li><li>d. What opportunities for professional development does your team experience?</li><li>e. Do all members of the team feel encouraged to develop their capacities to the full?</li><li>f. Does each team member regularly review his or her performance in face-to-face discussions?</li><li>g. Does the team as a whole regularly review the performance of the team?</li></ol></li><li>3. On the basis of your reflections, what suggestions would you make for the future development of the teams to which you belong?</li></ol>

#### **An Approach to Shared Learning**

Many curriculum and programme teams participate in inservice training that is provided outside the school. In some schools, there is a sharing of this learning within the whole staff.

A formal approach to the sharing of learning may prove helpful. Staff members who have recently attended in-service training for a programme or subject-area team may make a presentation to the whole staff as a large group or in smaller groups about their experiences.

Areas to concentrate on in a presentation might include:

- ◆ **Subject and themes of the training / course provider**
- ◆ **Expectations**
- ◆ **Learning outcomes and needs that were met**
- ◆ **Format of the inputs: lectures, workshops, skills,**
- ◆ **How successful each type of input was**
- ◆ **How the experience is being put to use in the job of teaching**
- ◆ **Likely benefits (if any) for the students in the classroom**
- ◆ **Why you would or would not recommend the course**



#### 4. Reflection on Practice

Reflection on practice is an essential component of professional development. On an individual level, teachers need to reflect on their practice. Currently there is little formal opportunity to do this in schools. Sharing of this reflection on practice with others in the staff group is also beneficial. Here are some questions to help in reflecting on practice:

<b>Reflection on Individual Practice</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. If you reflect on your teaching will this necessarily make your teaching better?</li><li>2. Did your own teacher education prepare you to be the kind of teacher who:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ questions educational goals, classroom relationships</li><li>◆ plays an active role in creating and critiquing curriculum</li><li>◆ considers a variety of instructional strategies?</li></ul></li><li>3. When you think about a classroom problem, do you try to see it from different angles?</li><li>4. Do you think that teachers should:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ play leadership roles in curriculum development, programme development, school reform, OR</li><li>◆ stick to their work in the classroom?</li></ul></li><li>5. What are some of the things you do automatically in the classroom without consciously thinking about them?</li><li>6. How have your past educational experiences informed and guided your understanding of yourself as a teacher?</li><li>7. Of those who taught you at school, what teachers stay with you in memory and what aspects of their teaching affect you today?</li><li>8. What are some of the experiences in your life that have influenced your current ideas about teaching and yourself as a teacher?</li><li>9. What are some of the important values that dominate your approach to teaching?</li><li>10. How can research about instructional strategies be of use to teachers?</li></ol>

#### 5. Support from External Providers

At different times, schools use the support of external providers to advance staff development. The following considerations may be useful in assessing the value of this approach:

1. Make a list of all outside professionals who have visited the school in the past year
2. Estimate the amount of time that each spent in the school
3. Consider whether each professional was in contact with (a) students or (b) staff
4. What conclusions do you draw from 1-3? What do these conclusions tell you about professional staff development in your school?
  - ◆ For each professional decide whether the contact was positive or negative
  - ◆ Assess whether this was due to structural, cultural or contact factors
  - ◆ How can negative relationships be improved?
  - ◆ How can you build on and enhance positive relationships?

### III. Planning for Staff Development in the School

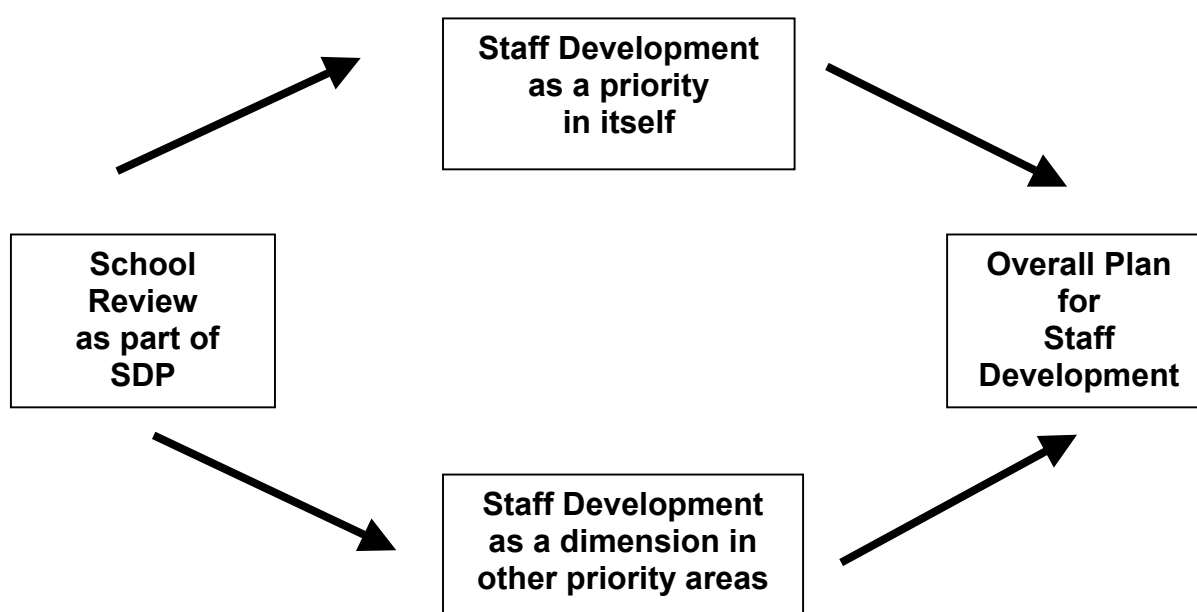
#### School Review

School review is an essential part of the process of linking school and staff development policies.

At the review stage, staff development will emerge in two ways:

1. It may emerge as a priority in itself.
2. On the other hand every other priority area will have a staff development dimension.

#### Emergence of Staff Development Needs in SDP



#### Staff Development Planning Process

Borrowing from the framework for School Development Planning, there are a number of stages through which planning for Staff Development can go:

- Stage One: Establishing a Shared Rationale for Staff Development**
- Stage Two: Identifying Staff Development Needs**
- Stage Three: Prioritising Staff Development Areas**
  - A. Where Staff Development emerges as a priority in itself**
  - B. Where Staff Development needs arise from other priority areas**
- Stage Four: Designing the Overall Staff Development Plan**
- Stage Five: Implementing and Monitoring**
- Stage Six: Evaluating the Staff Development Plan**

## **Stage One: Sharing a Rationale for Staff Development**

A shared rationale on the value of staff development must be worked out, since every member of staff has a part to play in planning for and implementing staff development. This process can be facilitated by the Convenor for Staff Development in the school or by the School Planning Facilitator. The following activities may be useful in developing a rationale for staff development.

### **Activities in Stage One**

The following activities can be used to promote discussion on staff development with a view to establishing a shared rationale:

#### **Activity 1.**

- 1. List in the box below seven benefits of staff development.**

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.

- 2. Talk to a colleague and compare your lists. Agree with your colleague the three most important benefits.**
- 3. When all the pairs on the school staff have completed this exercise, the whole staff can then consider the findings.**
- 4. As a follow-on exercise, the staff may prepare a statement of their shared understanding of the rationale for staff development, or a *mission statement* for themselves, looking at where they see their purpose in the school.**

## Activity 2.

1. **Against each of the numbers below there are two statements.  
Tick the statement which is closest to your feelings or opinion.**

<b>1</b>	Staff Development means sending someone on a course.  <input type="checkbox"/>	Staff Development and training should be part of a range of activities.  <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2</b>	It is the responsibility of the individual to see that she or he is properly skilled.  <input type="checkbox"/>	Training and Staff Development is a whole school responsibility.  <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3</b>	Learning and Staff Development is more effective if it is done by means of wide ranging, planned activities.  <input type="checkbox"/>	It is always best to let people learn from their own mistakes.  <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>4</b>	There is no point in thinking about Staff Development until it is needed.  <input type="checkbox"/>	Staff Development is most effective when it is planned in advance and part of a long-term programme.  <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>5</b>	Sending someone away for a course relieves the school of the responsibility for Staff Development.  <input type="checkbox"/>	The whole school should be involved in all kinds of training.  <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>6</b>	Any Staff Development and training is best done at quiet times of the year.  <input type="checkbox"/>	Staff Development and training is best done as soon as the skills are needed.  <input type="checkbox"/>

2. **As a follow-on, the staff in groups of five can discuss their responses to the questionnaire.**
3. **Each group can feedback to the whole staff.**
4. **A *rationale* for Staff Development is then agreed by the whole staff**

## **Stage Two: Identifying Staff Development Needs**

Having shared a **rationale** for staff development, the staff must now identify their development needs. Here there are two tasks:

- ◆ assessing individual needs, and
- ◆ assessing the school's needs

Identifying needs is a shared task. It is neither a top down nor bottom up model, it is a combination of the two. Research shows that effective staff development is person-centred enquiry and that peer support leads to effective school improvement. The climate must enable staff to become better learners and teachers. Staff colleagues must be viewed as critical friends. Opportunities to tease out professional needs should be provided. The Principal plays a key role here and should seek to participate in all aspects of the staff development.

Staff development needs may be identified in a number of ways:

- 1. In the review and audit stage in the school planning cycle, analysis of the school's provision and performance in relation to meeting pupils' needs may highlight areas where staff development would be beneficial**
- 2. Teachers' reflection on their own work may enable them to identify strengths on which they would like to build and weaknesses that they would like to redress.**
- 3. A process of team self-review may lead to the identification of staff development needs relevant to the work of particular teams within the school**
- 4. Priority needs in relation to new national programmes and curricula will need consideration.**
- 5. Every area prioritised by the school will have its own specific staff development needs. The 'resources' and 'who' sections of each action plan will point to the staff development measures that are required.**
- 6. The evaluation stage of the school planning cycle may reveal areas where additional expertise would be beneficial.**

Information about the training needs is collected, using the structures that the school has in place to promote staff development. There may be a convenor for staff development, a specific action group planning for staff development, or action groups planning for other priority areas.

The tools that may be used to collect the information include:

- ◆ Questionnaires
- ◆ Checklists
- ◆ Pro-formas (SCOT Analysis / Diagnostic Window)
- ◆ Interviews
- ◆ Action Plan Templates
- ◆ Feedback Report Templates (to summarise information gleaned through structured group discussions)

(See **Unit 3, Sections II and V**)

The following sample questionnaires can be used to engage teachers in examining and reflecting on their training needs.

Data generated from these two questionnaires can be used to promote a whole staff discussion on Staff Development needs. The Convenor for Staff Development may chair this discussion.

## **Questionnaire A: In-service Training Needs**

**1. Please identify the type of training you would find most helpful in the following areas:**

- i. Teaching your Subjects and Programmes
- ii. Resourcing Subjects and Programmes in the school
- iii. Developing Subjects and Programmes within the school
- iv. Establishing Cross-curricular Links
- v. Establishing Links outside of school with the community and with business
- vi. Interpersonal Skills Training (relevant to all the interactions you have in order to perform your job)
- vii. Training in ICT e.g. Computers, Video, and Overhead Projector?
- viii. Supporting the students in their learning?

**2. What other areas of training do you feel should be included?**

**3. Please give suggestions as to how the specified training might best be delivered.**  
*(Please continue overleaf if you wish)*

## **Questionnaire B: Staff Development Needs and Curriculum Change**

*This exercise can be used in a Subject or Programme Department or in a whole school context.*

**Consider the following questions.**

**Spend 15 minutes at the exercise on your own. Share your responses with a colleague. As a pair, agree and feed back two Staff Development needs to the whole staff or staff team.**

1. How have you found teaching new programmes and courses compares with your previous experience of teaching?
2. Does it place different demands on you?
3. What problems are you encountering, if any?
4. What training do you think you would need in order to deliver new programmes, courses and subjects to their fullest potential?
5. In terms of establishing new subjects and programmes in the school, are there any issues?
6. Can you identify any particular needs you have in relation to resources and materials?
7. Can you identify any needs you have in relation to delivering subjects and programmes?
8. Can you identify any training inputs or workshops which you feel would benefit you in teaching the programme?
9. From the perspective of the school as an organisation, does the area of Staff Development give rise to any important issues?
10. Are there any other issues you would like to raise in relation to the needs of teachers and school priority areas for planning?

### **Stage Three:        Prioritising Staff Development Areas.**

There are two dimensions to the task of prioritising Staff Development needs. These could be described as follows:

- ◆ **Stage 3A Prioritising Staff Development Needs where Staff Development Emerges as a Priority in Itself**
- ◆ **Stage 3B Prioritising Staff Development Needs Arising from the School's Other Priority Areas**

Regardless of how the Staff Development needs have been identified, arriving at a consensus for moving forward requires collaboration and co-operation from all the staff.

#### **Stage 3A:        Staff Development as a Priority in Itself**

In prioritising Staff Development needs from the range of needs identified in Stage 2, an appropriate balance must be struck between needs at individual, team and whole school levels, and between needs in different areas of schools life—curricular, pastoral, organisational....

Further criteria for deciding on Staff Development priorities could include the following:

- ◆ What are the Staff Development needs arising from new national programmes and syllabi and from new legislation and regulations? These must be given high priority.
- ◆ Which of the proposed Staff Development areas will best assist the teaching and learning in the school?
- ◆ What level of resourcing is available for Staff Development? Which or how many of the identified Staff Development needs has the school the capacity to address, in terms of budget, personnel, time?
- ◆ How does the proposed list of Staff Development priorities fit in with school policy on Staff Development?
- ◆ In deciding on Staff Development priorities, has consideration been given to equal opportunities policy?
- ◆ Do the Staff Development priorities selected fit in with the overall school plan?

At this point it will be important to draw in the Staff Development needs from the other priority areas.

(For further information on the process of prioritisation, see **Unit 3, Section III, Review Model B**, and **Section IV.**)

#### **Stage 3B:        Staff Development Needs Arising from the School's Other Priority Areas**

In each of the other priority areas identified by the school, Staff Development needs will have been indicated. These needs will be shown in the action plan for each area under the headings 'who' and 'resources'.



The following extracts from sample action plans may clarify the point:

<b>Priority 1:</b>	<b>To enhance the School Environment</b>
<b>Target 1:</b>	To introduce effective Litter -Control Measures
<b>Actions:</b>	..... Prepare school video on Litter
<b>Who:</b>	LCVP Class and Coordinator
<b>Resources:</b>	<i>LCVP Department will require outside expertise to advise on video production</i>

<b>Priority 2:</b>	<b>To improve Student Behaviour</b>
<b>Target 1:</b>	To introduce a Positive Discipline programme
<b>Actions:</b>	Research approaches to Positive Discipline .....
<b>Resources:</b>	<i>A speaker on Positive Discipline to present to the whole staff at the beginning of the school year</i>

The Staff Development needs from each priority area, identified under “Resources”, must be included in the school’s Overall Plan for Staff Development.

### **Stage Four: Designing the Overall Staff Development Plan**

A Task Group will draft the plan after priority areas for Staff Development have been agreed at whole-school level. The plan will outline all the activities that will take place to further Staff Development, for example:

- ◆ In school: school-based in-service, visiting speakers, mentoring, working with colleagues
- ◆ Out of school: network meetings, national in-service programmes, conferences, courses at Education Centres
- ◆ Off the job: personal professional development courses taken, research, secondments

The completed plan may:

1. Summarise the Staff Development programme for the period of the plan, indicating the activities that will take place to address each prioritised Staff Development need
2. Include a supporting Action Plan in relation to each prioritised Staff Development need, detailing the priority, targets, tasks, success criteria, resources, monitoring procedures and evaluation.

The plan is initially a draft for consideration by the whole staff. The support of school management is necessary for its successful implementation.

## 1. Staff Development Programme Summary

The following layout may assist in the preparation of the Staff Development Programme summary:

Staff Development Programme			
SD Priority Area	Staff Development Activity	For Whom?	Timeframe
<b>Staff Induction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Induction Seminar</li> <li>➤ Mentoring / Peer Support Programme</li> </ul>	# All teachers new to the school # Newly-qualified teachers and H.Dip students	End of August  September –May  <i>Every Year</i>
<b>Positive Discipline</b> <i>(Related to Priority: To improve student behaviour)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ School-based inservice seminar on Approaches to Positive Discipline</li> <li>➤ Out-of-school short course on Positive Discipline</li> <li>➤ Sharing of learning from course on Positive Discipline</li> </ul>	# Whole Staff  # Action Group on Positive Discipline  # Whole Staff	September, Year 1  Two sessions, Oct./Nov.  Input to January staff meeting
<b>Video Production</b> <i>(Related to Priority: To enhance the school environment)</i>  <i>Target: Litter Control)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Workshop on Video Production</li> </ul>	# LCVP Department (including students) and other interested teachers who are available	October, during LCVP class-time
<b>New Leaving Cert. Syllabus in Subject X</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Study of new syllabus by teachers of Subject X</li> <li>➤ Team Meeting of Department X to analyse changes and implications, share ideas</li> <li>➤ National Support Programme for Subject X</li> </ul>	# Teachers of Subject X  # Subject Department X  # Teachers of Subject X	When syllabus is received  September, Year 1  As scheduled by National Support Team
<b>Teaching and Learning Methodologies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Regional Workshop on Activity Based Learning by National Support Team</li> <li>➤ Sharing of learning from Workshop</li> <li>➤ School-based in-service workshop on Activity Based Learning</li> </ul>	# Representatives of LCA/LCV/TY Teams  # Meetings of LCA/LCV/TY Teams  # Whole Staff	As scheduled by National Support Team  Regular team meetings  First term, Year 2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤</li> </ul>		

Further Staff Development Programme templates are provided at the end of this section.

## 2. Staff Development Action Plans

The Action Plan in relation to each prioritised Staff Development need details the priority, targets, tasks, success criteria, resources, monitoring procedures and evaluation.

- ◆ The **priority** is the area needing attention, in this case a prioritised Staff Development need from the list selected in Stage 3.
- ◆ To plan for the priority, objectives are needed. These are called **targets**. A target is a guide to the immediate action and a focus for evaluation. In this context, each target is related to a specific Staff Development activity or measure to address the selected priority.
- ◆ To achieve the targets certain jobs must be done, these are **tasks**. Each job is identified, who is to do it and when.
- ◆ Criteria by which the outcome for each target may be judged at a later stage need to be specified. These **Success Criteria** enable evaluation of the plan and provide for the evidence needed to judge successful completion and implementation of the plan.

**When preparing the Action Plan to address a Staff Development need, consider the following questions:**

- i. What is the priority area for Staff Development to be addressed in this Action Plan?
- ii. What are the targets needed to address the stated priority?
- iii. What tasks have to be completed to meet the targets? For each target there may be a number of tasks
- iv. Who is responsible for completing each task?
- v. What actions are required if each task is to be completed?
- vi. What resources are required to implement the plan?
- vii. What are the success criteria in relation to each task?
- viii. Who will benefit from the implementation of the plan: students, colleagues, school community? How?
- ix. How will implementation be monitored?
- x. What are the procedures for final evaluation?

So, the link between prioritising a Staff Development need and follow up action is an **Action Plan**.

For further information on Action Planning, see *School Development Planning: An Introduction for Second Level Schools*, Chapter 2, and **Unit 4, Section I** of these Guidelines.

## Sample Staff Development Action Plan

<p><b>Priority:</b> To improve teaching and learning in the school</p> <p><b>Target :</b> To introduce the whole staff to the methodology of Activity Based Learning</p> <p><b>Tasks:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conduct a needs analysis covering all subject areas</li> <li>2. Agree a specific focus to deal with Activity Based Learning in view of needs identified.</li> <li>3. List expectations, resource materials and teaching aids required</li> <li>4. Access in-house expertise in Activity Based Learning</li> <li>5. Contact Second Level Support Service (SLSS) or other identified provider to get expertise and agree a suitable in-service approach and date</li> </ol>
<p><b>Action (How?):</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All staff complete a needs analysis questionnaire on active learning</li> <li>2. Convenor for Staff Development collects and analyses responses</li> <li>3. Feedback is given to whole-staff and a focus for the training is agreed</li> <li>4. Expected outcomes for an in-service day on Staff Development are listed and agreed</li> <li>5. SLSS personnel or identified provider and the Convenor for Staff Development plan an inservice programme to meet needs and expectations</li> </ol>
<p><b>When?</b></p> <p><b>Preparations:</b> May, Year 1; September, Year 2</p> <p><b>Staff Day:</b> First Term, Year 2</p>
<p><b>Who?</b></p> <p><b>Preparations:</b> Staff Action Group and Convenor for Staff Development, with identified provider</p> <p><b>Staff Day:</b> Identified External Provider, with the support of in-house expertise</p>
<p><b>Resources</b></p> <p>Venue for planning meetings, a budget, stationery, flip-chart, and time          Access to telephone and computer in the school          Services of identified external provider</p>
<p><b>Success Criteria</b></p> <p>All staff have completed a needs analysis on Activity Based Learning. A programme - focus for a staff day is agreed, expectations are listed. In-house experience is assessed and used on the Staff day. Teachers are using the new methodologies in their teaching. Students are learning in new ways.</p>
<p><b>Monitoring</b></p> <p>At the end of the staff-day an evaluation will take place. During the year outcomes will be measured. Checks will be made to see if expectations are achieved. The Convenor will interview one staff member from each Department area. Programme Co-ordinators will compile progress reports on how the methodologies are being used. Students will be surveyed to see if they are experiencing and enjoying new ways of learning. Further inputs on in-service will be provided if required.</p>
<p><b>Evaluation</b></p> <p>An end-of-year review will take place to assess success re target: providing an introduction to Activity Based Learning for all staff. The impact on learning and teaching in three subject areas will be explored. The Staff Development Action Group will report to the staff on the outcomes, indicating how Activity Based Learning methodology was implemented and pointing to implications for further work in this area. Successful new practices will be disseminated to all staff.</p>

## **Stage Five: Implementation and Monitoring**

When the Staff Development Plan is in place, it is acted on. Regular review at specific intervals is needed. Progress in attaining the objectives of the Plan may be monitored by implementing the monitoring procedures that are outlined in each constituent Action Plan and applying the success criteria that are specified. Plans are flexible and may be changed if monitoring shows that there are difficulties in implementing them or that the success criteria are not being met.

In monitoring the effectiveness of the overall Staff Development Plan, it is useful to ask all members of the teaching staff to give their feelings about staff development. The following exercises and activities may assist:

**Individually, and then in groups of five, selected randomly, address the following:**

**1. Identify a poor staff development experience**

**2. List five features of the experience:**

- ◆
- ◆
- ◆
- ◆
- ◆

**3. Identify a good staff development experience**

**4. List five features of the experience**

- ◆
- ◆
- ◆
- ◆
- ◆

**5. For each of the two types of experience:**

- i. What were the key success or failure points?
- ii. Why was the experience good or bad?
- iii. What needs were met or unmet?
- iv. How did the time and place of the experience contribute to its success or failure?
- v. How did the staff engaged in the experience perform as a group?

**6. On the basis of your reflections, list seven criteria that should be borne in mind to promote worthwhile staff development**

- i.
- ii.
- iii.
- iv.
- v.
- vi.
- vii.

**Stage Six: Evaluating the Staff Development Plan**

Evaluation is essential. The real impact of the Staff Development Plan must be gauged to inform future planning for staff development. Evidence must be gathered to ascertain whether the success criteria detailed in each Action Plan have been met. A number of tools can be used. See **Unit 5, Section II** of these Guidelines. Evaluation can take place at staff meetings or through individual or team reviews.

The following questions may assist the shaping of the evaluation process:

- 1. What were the objectives of the Staff Development Plan?**
- 2. How were these objectives to be achieved?**
- 3. What information is needed to evaluate the implementation and outcomes of the Plan? How will this information be collected?**
- 4. On the basis of the information collected, how effective was the Plan?**
- 5. What were the costs associated with the various elements of the Plan? In proportion to their effectiveness, which elements provided best value?**
- 6. What further action is required?**

**Evaluating School Commitment to Staff Development**

The purpose of staff development is to improve learning and teaching in the school. It requires the commitment of teachers both individually and collectively to reflect on and learn from their experiences. Its success depends on staff motivation and the satisfaction of needs. The principal has the potential to play a dominant role in developing a culture of professional development in the school. It is important to recognise that every member of a school staff has a capacity for growth and development. It is essential that staff development assumes a high priority for school management.

**The following checklists are useful in monitoring and evaluating school commitment to Staff Development. On completion of the checklists, staff as a whole group can share their responses. This feedback will inform Staff Development Planning in the new planning cycle.**

## Survey of School Commitment to Staff Development

### Checklist 1.

<i>Please tick one response to each question</i>	YES	NO
Are teachers facilitated to avail of ongoing development and training opportunities?		
Does the school avail of training offered by outside agencies?		
Does the school identify training needs?		
Has the school responded to identified training needs by organising in-house training?		
Has the school identified appropriate training materials?		
Has the school provided appropriate materials to encourage quality learning and teaching?		
Are the teachers satisfied with the materials provided		
Has the school financed provision of materials?		
Does the school maximise the abilities, competencies and interests of teachers in their teaching?		
Has a policy for staff development been put in place?		
Is evaluation of training opportunities provided for?		

### Checklist 2.

<i>Please tick one response to each statement</i>	YES	NO
1. Leadership in the school encourages and supports the professional development of staff.		
2. There is a written active policy, which promotes and guides professional development opportunities for individual staff members and for the whole staff.		
3. There is one person and / or committee within the school with a clear and specific responsibility for promoting and co-ordinating the professional development of staff.		
4. The majority of staff show evidence of an ongoing commitment to studies and experiences which have the potential to enhance their effectiveness in the school.		
5. Existing attitudes and structures encourage feedback and sharing from staff who attend seminars, in-services etc. or whose academic studies deal with important issues to do with teaching and learning.		
6. There is a good spirit of collaboration among staff in the design and implementation of learning units and in the evaluation of curriculum.		
7. School-based initiatives in staff development e.g. pupil-free days are usually relevant and well organised, and are a boost to the ongoing process of school improvement.		
8. There are policies and structures in place to support ownership of outcomes to staff development initiatives and to ensure follow-up.		
9. There are practices in supervision, mentoring and appraisal which help staff to grow professionally		
10. The full range of initiatives in staff development recognises the diversity of needs among staff and endeavours to cater for personal as well as professional needs of staff		

## Summary Chart

### Developing an Overall Plan for Staff Development.

#### **STAGE ONE: Sharing a Rationale**

**Task:** Develop a rationale

**Who:** Principal and the whole staff

**How:** Process of individual reflection, pair/group discussion, plenary session, using appropriate activity worksheets

**When:** During whole-staff meeting/seminar

**Resources:** Expertise to plan, prepare for and facilitate the process; meeting / seminar time and facilities; copies of handouts / worksheets

**Success Criteria:** Rationale for Staff Development, based on shared perspectives, is agreed

#### **STAGE TWO: Identifying Staff Development Needs**

**Task:** Review staff development needs in the school

**Who:** Facilitator as part of the review process in School Development Planning, the Staff Development Action Group or Convenor for Staff Development, Action Groups from other priority areas, Programme and Department Coordinators, in consultation with the whole staff

**How:** Use appropriate tools such as SCOT Analysis, Diagnostic Window, questionnaires, activities and exercises given in this Unit and in **Unit 3, Section V**

**When:** Prior to/during whole-staff School Development Planning day; at meetings of Action Groups, Programme Teams, Department Groups, as appropriate

**Resources:** A facilitator for School Planning or expertise on Staff Development from outside the school, internal structures to support Staff Development, meeting / staff day time and facilities, copies of selected worksheets

**Success Criteria:** Staff Development needs have been identified by all members of staff and collated by means of appropriate school structures, such as Action Group and / or Convenor, for presentation to Principal and whole staff.

#### **STAGE THREE: Prioritising Staff Development Needs**

**Task:** Prioritise Staff Development needs from the range of needs identified in Stage 2.

**Who:** Principal with appropriate school personnel, such as Convenor for task group in each priority area and Staff Development Convenor / Action Group, in consultation with whole staff

**How:** Apply criteria of importance (in terms of relevance to externally-prescribed change and to school initiatives), feasibility, balance, and prominence in staff feedback. Determine which of the identified needs are most relevant to national curriculum / syllabus requirements, agreed development priorities in the School Plan, staff development policy, policies on gender balance and equal opportunity.

**When:** As soon as is feasible after the identification of needs

**Resources:** Meeting time / facilities, copies of collated list of all identified staff development needs, summary information on forthcoming externally-prescribed changes and school development priorities, copies of relevant school policies, information on budget available for staff development

**Success Criteria:** Staff development priorities have been agreed. The agreed staff development priority areas fit in with whole school policy and the school plan.



#### **STAGE FOUR: Designing the Overall Staff Development Plan**

**Task:** Design overall plan for Staff Development with the key aim of improving teaching and learning.

**Who:** Action group / Convenor for Staff Development, in collaboration with programme teams, subject departments, action groups

**How:** **(1)** Using a suitable pro-forma template or format, prepare a summary Staff Development programme, incorporating all the agreed Staff Development priority areas. Using input from each staff team and action group (including the staff development group), identify Staff Development activities to address each priority. Establish an outline time-frame for the activities. **(2)** Develop an Action Plan to address each Staff Development priority area [Note: (1) and (2) are likely to overlap in time, as each informs the other]

**When:** Agree an appropriate timeframe.

**Resources:** Support in preparing Action Plans from the SDP Regional Co-ordinator or facilitator. Resource books and databases on expertise available in the specific staff priority areas. Budget to provide for external expertise. Access to meeting time, a telephone and provision for storage of materials and library.

**Success Criteria:** The Plan has been prepared, detailing the Staff Development timetable for a specific period.

#### **STAGE FIVE: Implementation and Monitoring**

**Task:** Implement the Staff Development plan. Monitor progress on a regular basis.

**Who:** Specified personnel (to arrange implementation). All staff (to participate). The principal with appropriate school personnel, such as Staff Development Convenor/Action Group or Coordinators of programme teams or subject departments (to monitor progress). Involvement of external course providers, support personnel, critical friend or mentor, as appropriate to the plan

**How:** Use the key aim of the Staff Development plan as a constant frame of reference. Carry out the tasks allotted in the Action Plans. Support colleagues in the fulfilment of their responsibilities. Implement the monitoring procedures outlined in each constituent Action Plan. Adhere as far as possible to time-scales. Identify adjustments needed.

**When:** Throughout the agreed timeframe for the plan.

**Resources:** For implementation: budget, expertise, facilities and materials, as specified in each constituent Action Plan. For monitoring: personnel, meeting time, expertise on methods of monitoring.

**Success Criteria:** The Staff Development plan is implemented. Progress in relation to success criteria for each Staff Development priority area is reviewed regularly. Deviations from the plan are spotted and addressed. Necessary adjustments are made.

**STAGE SIX: Evaluation of Staff Development Plan**

**Task:** Evaluate the Staff Development Plan

**Who:** A school team - the Principal and a Review Group nominated from the whole staff. The Action Group can review outcomes with the whole staff.

**How:** Implement the evaluation procedures specified in each constituent Action Plan. Collect evidence of outcomes using appropriate tools, such as a skills-analysis questionnaire administered to whole staff both before and at the end of the period of the Staff Development plan. Apply success criteria. Identify strengths and weaknesses of the outcomes. Consider the issues that need to be addressed in the next planning cycle.

**When:** At the end of the planning cycle, 1 year or 3 years.

**Resources:** Support and expertise, appropriate tools to collect and collate data, personnel and time

**Success Criteria:** The evaluation report reveals the outcomes of the Staff Development activities and experiences. Activities that have been effective in promoting improvement in learning and teaching are highlighted. The level of success in addressing the prioritised Staff Development needs is gauged. Issues that need to be addressed in the next planning cycle are identified.

### Staff Development Programme Summary : Template 1

Staff Development Programme				
Staff Development Priority Area	Staff Development Activity	For whom?	Provider	Timeframe

### Staff Development Programme Summary : Template 2

Staff Development Programme						
Staff Development Area	Staff Development Activity	For Whom?	Provider	Timeframe	Responsibility (in the school)	Costs

## **IV. Staff Development Policy**

A policy on Staff Development states what the organisation is intending to achieve in the area of professional development, and outlines how this will happen.

The policy statement may include the following:

1. The name and scope of the policy and its relationship to the School Development Plan.
2. Roles and responsibilities in relation to the policy
3. Policy aims
4. Policy content--provisions indicating how the aims are to be achieved.
5. Monitoring and evaluation procedures and criteria
6. As little jargon as possible.

For further information on policy-writing, see **Unit 4, Section III** of these guidelines.

### **Sample Staff Development Policy**

#### **Whole School Policy on Staff Development**

This policy recognises the key role of the teacher in ensuring quality learning and teaching within this school. It is rooted in our fundamental aim to provide a quality education for all our students.

#### **Relationship to SDP**

Staff Development is vital to enable the school to address its development priorities, to undertake initiatives, and to meet the changing needs of students

#### **Rationale**

Continuing Staff Development is recognised as essential to keep pace with the changing nature of schooling. Teachers are a major asset in the school community and require regular up-skilling and retraining.

#### **Aims**

1. To ensure consistent approaches in the provision of staff development opportunities for all staff.
2. To provide for an equitable distribution of time and resources.
3. To provide a proper planned approach to Staff Development.
4. To promote the development by teachers of regular self-review and effective self-evaluation.
5. To enable the staff to develop a capacity for adapting to change and participating in a learning organisation.
6. To enhance the professional development of the staff.
7. To encourage the staff to take an interest and share responsibility for their own professional development.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

*(in developing, implementing, monitoring, evaluating the policy)*

### **1. Board of Management**

- ◆ To ensure that the policy is developed and reviewed at regular intervals
- ◆ To approve the policy
- ◆ To consider reports from the Principal on the implementation of the policy
- ◆ To ensure provision for Staff Development in the school

### **2. Principal**

- ◆ To establish consultative procedures for the development of the policy
- ◆ To establish structures and procedures for the implementation of the policy including finance and personnel
- ◆ To monitor the implementation of the policy

### **3. Teachers**

- ◆ To contribute to the development of the policy
- ◆ To implement the policy as individuals, as team members and as members of the whole staff.
- ◆ To partake in self review
- ◆ To attend courses and engage in staff development activities as requested
- ◆ To keep records of courses and in-service activities attended
- ◆ To share learning experiences, skills and competencies for the benefit of the organisation
- ◆ To monitor and evaluate the Staff Development policy in relation to the self

## **Policy Content**

*(Suggestions)*

1. Each member of staff will take part in a review of Staff Development needs
2. Each member of staff will complete a survey on 'Needs Analysis'
3. A Staff Development Programme for each year will be drawn up, taking account of the findings of the needs analysis survey
4. A balance will be maintained in the Staff Development Programme between active-learning and theory based needs, between individual and school needs, and between needs in different areas of school life
5. The Staff Development Programme will take account of equality considerations
6. The Staff Development Programme will take account of the availability of resources
7. All members of staff taking part in external courses will provide feedback for colleagues
8. All members of staff will participate in the evaluation of the Staff Development Programme

## **Success Criteria**

1. Each member of staff contributes to agreed guidelines on the amount and type of Staff Development that is desirable
2. All staff are consulted about the type and content of any school-based staff development
3. Subject Departments develop guidelines on the skills, competencies and training required in each subject area
4. Staff attend courses provided
5. Staff agree different samples of evidence that will help in seeing if aims are being achieved
6. Progress is achieved in relation to each of the aims
7. Effective learning activities have been developed for students
8. The activities in the Staff Development programme have been of help to teachers

### **Implementation**

1. Self-review will place at the beginning of each year
2. One -year targets will be agreed
3. Each staff member will agree to take responsibility for their own learning, with the aims of the school taking primary importance
4. The Principal will establish structures and procedures for Staff Development to take place
5. The Staff Development Convenor and or the Action Group will support and monitor the Staff Development Programme

### **Monitoring Personnel and Procedures**

1. Each member of staff will take part in self-evaluation and reflection
2. Groups and Subject Departments will conduct on-going informal discussions
3. Feedback will be given to Course Providers and the Staff Development Convenor.
4. Spot Checks at staff meetings will be used
5. Staff who attend courses outside the school will be encouraged to share experiences with colleagues.
6. The Principal will report to the BOM each term on Staff Development initiatives

### **Review and Evaluation**

1. The policy will be reviewed after three years
2. The review team will comprise of the Principal, Deputy, Staff Development Convenor, two staff members (taking account of gender balance), and the Critical Friend or SDP Co-ordinator

## V. References

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- Tuohy, D. *School Leadership and Strategic Planning*. Dublin: ASTI, 1997.
- Tuohy, D. *The Inner World of Teaching: Exploring Assumptions*. London : Falmer Press, 1999.

### Support Services

#### SDPI Support Service:

SDPI Office, Marino Institute of Education, Griffith Avenue, Dublin 9

Phone: 01 8057729  
Fax: 01 8535112  
Email: [info@sdpi.ie](mailto:info@sdpi.ie)

#### Second Level Support Service SLSS

Blackrock Education Centre, Kill Avenue, Dun Laoghaire, Co.Dublin

Phone: 01 2301673  
Fax: 01 2301612  
Email: [slss@blackrock-edu.ie](mailto:slss@blackrock-edu.ie)



## **Websites**

### ***Ireland***

School Development Planning Post-Primary	<a href="http://www.sdpi.ie">www.sdpi.ie</a>
School Development Planning Primary	<a href="http://www.sdps.ie">www.sdps.ie</a>
Association of Secondary Teachers of Ireland	<a href="http://www.asti.ie">www.asti.ie</a>
Computer Education Society of Ireland	<a href="http://www.iol.ie/~cesi">www.iol.ie/~cesi</a>
DES Republic of Ireland	<a href="http://www.irlgov.ie/educ">www.irlgov.ie/educ</a>
DES Northern Ireland	<a href="http://www.deni.gov.uk">www.deni.gov.uk</a>
Division of In-service Education TCD	<a href="http://www.tcd.ie">www.tcd.ie</a>
Irish National Teachers Organisation	<a href="http://www.into.ie">www.into.ie</a>
Irish Vocational Education Association	<a href="http://www.ivea.ie">www.ivea.ie</a>
National Association of Principals and Deputies NAPD	<a href="http://www.napd.ie">www.napd.ie</a>
National Centre for Technology in Education	<a href="http://www.ncte.ie">www.ncte.ie</a>
National Council for Curriculum and Assessment	<a href="http://www.ncca.ie">www.ncca.ie</a>
Northern Ireland Network for Education	<a href="http://www.nine.org.uk">www.nine.org.uk</a>
ScoilNet	<a href="http://www.scoilnet.ie">www.scoilnet.ie</a>
Secretariat of Secondary Schools	<a href="http://www.jmbsecretariat.org">www.jmbsecretariat.org</a>
Teachers' Union of Ireland	<a href="http://www.tui.ie">www.tui.ie</a>
Údarás na Gaeltachta	<a href="http://www.udaras.ie">www.udaras.ie</a>

### ***International***

DES England	<a href="http://www.dfes.gov.uk">www.dfes.gov.uk</a>
National Grid for Learning	<a href="http://www.education-quest.com">www.education-quest.com</a>
Scottish Executive	<a href="http://www.scotland.gov.uk">www.scotland.gov.uk</a>
Times Educational Supplement	<a href="http://www.tes.co.uk">www.tes.co.uk</a>
Virtual Teacher Centre	<a href="http://www.vtc.ngfl.gov.uk">www.vtc.ngfl.gov.uk</a>

## **VI. Notes**

We are grateful to Dr. David Tuohy, National University of Ireland, Galway, for his advice on international research findings in relation to the professional development of teachers and for his support in the preparation of this Unit.