

Chapter Three

How Can Guidance Work be Organized

The Guidance Team

Under the framework of the Whole School Approach to Guidance, guidance work is delivered by all school personnel to create a positive, inviting and caring school environment where students can grow and realize their potential, and their needs are addressed in a constructive manner. The Principal is the leading force in setting the directives. All teachers, school social workers and school personnel should work together to help students develop into whole persons. Functional teams should co-ordinate their work towards the school mission. Among them, a Guidance Team should be set up to facilitate the planning, co-ordination, implementation and evaluation of guidance work.

In Hong Kong, different schools adopt different systems in the delivery of guidance work. Some schools adopt an integrative approach and combine their guidance and discipline teams into a pastoral care team, whereas in some other schools, a senior teacher is designated to oversee and implement the school's guidance and discipline policy. It is not uncommon to find that one of the Assistant Principals is appointed as the supervisor of the pastoral care services and/or student welfare services, whose duties include co-ordinating the work of the Guidance Team, Discipline Team and related functional teams such as the Careers Team and the Extra-curricular Activities Unit.

Elements of Effective School Guidance

Past experience shows that the effectiveness of guidance work would be greatly enhanced if a Guidance Team comprising a core group of teachers is set up to plan, co-ordinate, implement and evaluate guidance work. The school social worker, who has the expertise in supporting teachers by providing information on community resources, implementing guidance programmes, working on students' families and handling referrals, should also be invited as a core member of the Guidance Team. Most important of all, the Principal should nominate an experienced teacher to head the Guidance Team, compile the yearly plan, co-ordinate the work of the team members, and collaborate with related functional teams in the school.

Delivery of guidance work in schools requires professional support from all teachers and the school social worker, as well as strong leadership from the Principal. Nevertheless, under the principle of school-based management, schools are given the flexibility in staff deployment which suits their circumstances and needs.

Personality Characteristics of Guidance Teachers and Guidance Team Leader

The selection of guidance teachers should be carefully conducted as they are crucial to the successful implementation of school guidance work. Staff with the following traits are preferred:

- be emotionally stable
- be open-minded and has a mature outlook of life

- be positive and optimistic

..... ***Mobilization of Teachers***

- be interested in working with young people
- be warm and friendly
- be patient towards students, understand and accept their needs, strengths and weaknesses
- be empathetic towards students by taking perception in their world
- be able to maintain good relationships with pupils and colleagues
- be willing to observe confidentiality

Moreover, it is necessary for guidance teachers, especially the Guidance Team Leader, to receive training in basic skills in student guidance and counselling. In addition, as one of the middle managers in school, the Guidance Team Leader should possess training, experience and skills in the management of school guidance work and teamwork. Therefore, the professional training the Guidance Team Leader and the regular professional development for guidance teachers are crucial to the enhancement of school guidance work.

Professional Training of Guidance Team Leader

The Guidance Team Leader plays an important role in assisting the Principal to formulate the school's guidance policy as well as facilitating the overall delivery of student guidance service. As such, apart from possessing the personality characteristics pertaining to guidance teachers, the Guidance Team Leader should have adequate training not only in general guidance skills, but also in guidance management such as skills and knowledge in formulating, co-ordinating school's guidance policy, planning and conducting affective programmes for students and monitoring the effective use of guidance resources.

Therefore, in choosing personnel to be the Guidance Team Leader, the Principal
Elements of Effective School
Guidance

should consider a more experienced teacher who has received professional training in guidance.

Regular Professional Development for Teachers

To implement the Whole School Approach to Guidance, all teachers should be introduced the concept through briefing or training sessions. Teachers need to have basic awareness of and common belief in the principles and practices of guidance and counselling. Formal and informal channels of communication should also be provided for teachers to develop a consensus view about students' needs for guidance.

The Whole School Approach to Guidance involves all teachers to collaborate in running preventive and developmental guidance programmes either in the classrooms or through activities after normal school hours. In conducting guidance activities, teachers' skills to stimulate discussion and self-reflection among the students are essential. Such skills could be acquired through formal training and/or experience sharing. On top of the cognitive training, teachers need to be aware of the importance of giving opportunities for students to share their experiences among themselves. Both students and teachers benefit in the process of applying and internalizing the affective values of positive self-concept, self-respect, respect for others and responsible behaviour. Schools should, apart from sending teachers to attend training courses, arrange on-going professional development at school-based level. Experienced guidance teachers, educational psychologists, officers from Education Department and school social workers are

valuable trainers/facilitators in running workshops and experience sharing sessions.

.....*Close Liaison with Parents*

Keeping Records and Statistics

In the delivery of guidance service, records are useful means of monitoring progress and collecting information for further reference. These normally comprise:

1. individual case records and progress reports (sample in Appendix 2, Form C) ; and
2. statistics on the number and nature of cases dealt with (sample in Appendix 2, Form B) .

Appendix 2 contains suggestions on records and forms, which may be required by different members of the Guidance Team. Schools can design their own records according to their needs. These records should be up-dated frequently and be accessible to the Principal or his designated staff upon request. The Principal and his/her designated staff should ensure confidentiality of the cases.

One major task of the Guidance Team Leader is to co-ordinate the task of keeping records. He also assists the team in compiling statistical information which will provide insights into the trends of students' problems and their contributing factors so that appropriate guidance programmes can be planned. Hence, in consultation with the guidance teachers or school social worker, the Guidance Team Leader will classify and record the cases handled according to the major presenting problems and their most prominent causes.

Elements of Effective School Guidance

Exchanging Views Through Meetings

Regular meetings among school staff are essential in planning the school's guidance work and sharing experiences during the course of implementation. These are usually held at the following levels:

A. Co-ordination Meetings

These meetings are chaired by the Principal or his designate and attended by the Guidance Team Leader and all functional team leaders who should have an involvement in the planning and implementation of school guidance policy. All teachers should be involved in identifying the needs and school goals for pastoral care especially in the planning stage. At least two co-ordination meetings should be held each school year, one at the beginning and the other at the end of the school year.

It is advisable to arrange the first meeting as early as possible before the beginning of the school year. The objectives of this meeting are to:

- collect information from members: areas of concern on student guidance and proposed domains for staff development; and
- discuss and formulate the draft year plan.

If necessary, the year plan could be modified in the course of the year.

At the end of the school year, the co-ordination meeting is held to:

.....***Positive School Climate***

- review the implementation of the year plan on guidance work and school 's co-operation within and outside the school system;
- evaluate the programmes conducted;
- identify areas of concern and needs of students, and work out measures for further development in the next academic year; and
- solicit suggestions on the year plan and programmes for students.

B. Guidance Team Meetings

A guidance team meeting should be conducted at the beginning of the school year. In this meeting, the Guidance Team Leader should introduce new members of the Team, delineate duties and set year plan on the implementation of pastoral care services as decided at the co-ordination meeting.

Throughout the year, team meetings should be conducted regularly to:

- discuss, report and review progress of guidance programmes;
- discuss, report and review progress of cases including statistics;
- discuss new cases, especially complicated cases; and
- discuss operational difficulties and share experience.

*Elements of Effective School
Guidance*

C. Ad hoc Meetings

Ad hoc meetings should be called whenever such a need arises.

D. Case Conferences

In some schools, the Guidance Team and school social worker regularly discuss the progress of cases in the guidance team meetings. For serious cases, it is necessary for the Guidance Team Leader or school social worker to arrange case conferences. This provides an opportunity for team members, school social worker and related school personnel to share views on the cases to facilitate a more comprehensive assessment, work out intervention strategies and monitor progress. If necessary, outside experts such as psychiatrists, clinical psychologists etc. can be invited to join the case conferences. This ensures that appropriate division of labour and collaboration among professionals in the support of students in the school system can be achieved.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Principal, assisted by an Assistant Principal or a senior teacher, has the responsibility of monitoring the progress of implementing the school policy on guidance. Periodic reviews have to be undertaken to evaluate the effectiveness of the programmes, the process of service delivery and the operation of the

system.

.....*Continuous Evaluation*

Confidentiality

Some adolescents tend to be self-conscious and defensive against adult's intrusion into their privacy, making it difficult to fathom their problems. A good teacher-student relationship can earn their trust. Confidentiality is necessary for the establishment of a trusting relationship between teachers and students. The principle of the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance should be observed on releasing personal data. Hence, interview sessions should be conducted in private. Besides, student records should be kept carefully.

However, it is not advisable for teachers to keep all discussions confidential, particularly in cases where students are exposed to moral and physical danger, as well as suspected child abuse.

In case the students do not give their consent, teachers should make them realize that they are obliged by professional ethics to protect them and to ensure they are safe from suicidal attempt or child abuse. Teachers should not promise to keep their suicidal behaviour or child abuse incident confidential, but should clarify with the students their plan to help them set their mind at ease of the possible outcomes after the disclosure. In such cases, teachers need to seek help from the Principal, and Guidance Team Leader and the school social worker.

The principle of shared confidentiality should be observed. Teachers should keep to the ethics of revealing everything that is necessary to the right persons and absolutely nothing that is not. If outside help is required, teachers

should discuss with the student to whom, to what extent, and for what specific reasons will the information be divulged. In most cases, students would give their consent willingly since they need help from others.

Elements of Effective School Guidance.....

Professional Support Outside Schools

Whenever required, the Guidance Team can seek expert support from other professional bodies and community resources. In particular, the educational psychologists will offer psychological, social and educational assessment services and/or professional consultation on management of difficult cases on a referral basis.

Should the Guidance Team Leader, after prior handling, find it necessary to seek other professional support, he can refer the case to the appropriate agency, along with relevant personal data and background information presented by the student. He should make sure that prior parental consent has been obtained, and the principle of the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance is observed. If an outward referral is made, the Principal should be informed. Both parents and students should be prepared properly for outside professional assistance. Close co-ordination and communication between the Guidance Team, school social worker and outside professionals should be kept in order to have smooth collaboration to support the students in the school system.

Mobilization of Resources

In providing guidance service for students, schools could make full use of all available resources, including human resources within the school as well as community resources outside the school. The school social worker is a

resourceful personnel who could provide teachers with information on governmental and non-governmental organizations offering youth services. Besides, parents and alumni who are well acquainted with the school, are also**Strong Leadership**

useful human resources in running guidance activities

With the advancement of information technology, teachers can easily access related websites for information and references on guidance. Teachers can also make use of electronic mails to exchange information and views related to student guidance with teachers of the same school and/or other schools easily. At the same time, students' opinion could be solicited through electronic means when teachers plan and evaluate guidance programmes. In addition, chatting with students through electronic means could be an effective way to reach them and start building up mutual relationship with them. In this connection, it is crucial that teachers should provide proper guidance to students, in particular, on ethical issues related to the use of information technology to obtain information and to communicate with people. Teachers also need to alert students to be aware of the possible traps when they 'chat' with friends through the ICQ.

Experience sharing through networking has started to take form in Hong Kong. Teachers are encouraged to make use of this supportive network for sharing of valuable experiences and modelling of good practices related to guidance.

In organizing guidance activities, apart from the Programme Funds for Whole School Approach to Guidance and Discipline which schools receive from the Education Department every year, teachers may also consider applying for other funds such as the Quality Education Fund.