



Subject:

SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS AND GUIDANCE

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Audience:

- Principals and Chairpersons of Boards of Governors of all grant-aided schools;
- Education and Library Boards;
- Council for Catholic Maintained Schools;
- Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education;
- Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta;
- Association of Governing Bodies of Grammar Schools;
- Teachers' Unions.

Summary of Contents:

This Circular sets out the requirements for the Boards of Governors of grant-aided schools to prepare, and from time to time revise, a school development plan in accordance with SR 2005 No. 303 Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005. Coming into operation 1st September 2005.

Enquiries:

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Governor Awareness
Essential

Status of Contents:
Information for schools

Related Documents:
Circular 2005/03 – School Development Days, 2005/06
Circular 2004/12 – Target-Setting & Benchmarking

Superseded Documents:

Expiry Date:

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SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLANS – REGULATIONS AND GUIDANCE

1. This Circular is to advise schools that, with effect from 1 September 2005, regulations will be in place to require the Board of Governors of a grant-aided school to prepare, and maintain a school development plan. The regulations have been made under Articles 13 (3) and 90 (3) of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998.
2. In May 2004 the Department consulted with a sample of schools, along with other interested parties, inviting them to give their views on the contents of the draft regulations. Schools not included in the sample were made aware of the exercise and invited to participate if they so wished. A total of 379 schools were included in the sample and further 21 schools requested copies of the documents. A total of 151 schools (38%) responded with the majority being in favour of the proposals.
3. The Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005 apply to all school development plans prepared after 1 September 2005 and aim to bring consistency to the content of school development plans and to provide a context and framework within which the school can monitor, evaluate and improve the nature of its curricular and other provision and the standards achieved by its pupils. An effective plan will assist the school in identifying and building on its strengths and identifying its areas for improvement so that these can be addressed. In doing so, it offers an effective way to harness the collective experience of the teachers, to promote teamwork, and to plan for and implement change for improvement.
4. The regulations detail the following;
 - matters to be dealt with by a school development plan;
 - the period for which a school development plan is to have effect;
 - publication of a school development plan; and
 - revision of a school development plan.
5. In the preparation and revision of the school's plan the Board of Governors must consult with the principal, consider the findings from any inspection of the school and any guidance given by the Department, the relevant Education and Library Board and, in the case of Catholic maintained schools, the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools.
6. A copy of the regulations can be purchased from The Stationery Office.

School Development Plans - Guidance

7. The guidance material issued to schools in 1998 has been updated to assist schools as they seek to meet the requirements of the regulations regarding school development planning. The revised document highlights the need for the Board of Governors, in consultation with the school principal to, inter alia:-
 - conduct, in a constructively critical manner, an appraisal of current performance, identifying areas where good performance needs to be consolidated and also where improvements need to be made.;
 - ensure that plans and priorities are based on realistic assessment of the financial resources likely to be available; and

- consult with the staff in the school, parents and pupils.
8. Copies of the regulations, guidance and circular are available on the Department's website and can be downloaded. The guidance booklet will be issued to schools on 24 August; a limited number of additional copies will be available from the Department on request after that date.

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