A Case Study Exploring the Perceptions of Regular Teachers of a Whole School Approach to Guidance Counselling in a Mid West Post-Primary School

By

JAMES GALVIN
STUDENT ID: 9422544

UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK

Research Supervisor: Dr. Lucy Hearne

Course: Master of Arts in Guidance Counselling

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Declaration

The author hereby declares that this thesis is entirely his own work. No element of the work described in this dissertation has been previously submitted for any degree in University of Limerick, or any other institution.

Signature: [Signature]

[Signature]
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# Glossary

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACCS</td>
<td>Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEDEFOP</td>
<td>European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRA</td>
<td>Children's Rights Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSPE</td>
<td>Civic, Social and Political Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DES</td>
<td>Department of Education and Skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEIS</td>
<td>Delivery of Equality of Opportunity in Schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECA</td>
<td>Extra-Curricular Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>European Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEA</td>
<td>Higher Education Authority</td>
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<td>HSCL</td>
<td>Home School Community Liaison</td>
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<tr>
<td>IGC</td>
<td>Institute of Guidance Counsellors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITE</td>
<td>Initial Teacher Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IVEA</td>
<td>Irish Vocational Education Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JC</td>
<td>Junior Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JCSP</td>
<td>Junior Certificate Schools Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JMB</td>
<td>Joint Management Body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LC</td>
<td>Leaving Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LCA</td>
<td>Leaving Certificate Applied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LCVP</td>
<td>Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAPD</td>
<td>National Association for Principals and Deputy Principals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCCA</td>
<td>National Council for Curriculum and Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCGE</td>
<td>National Centre for Guidance in Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEWB</td>
<td>National Education Welfare Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSB</td>
<td>Personal Safety Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSI</td>
<td>The Psychological Society of Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCP</td>
<td>School Completion Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPHE</td>
<td>Social, Personal and Health Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPSS</td>
<td>Statistical Package for Social Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSP</td>
<td>School Support Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>SST</td>
<td>Student Support Team</td>
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<tr>
<td>STS</td>
<td>Science-Technology Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VEC</td>
<td>Vocational Education Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>WSA</td>
<td>Whole School Approach</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Abstract

The overall aim of this study was to explore the perceptions of regular teachers of a whole school approach (WSA) to guidance counselling in a mid west post-primary school. The study focuses on the critical discourse developing in the area of guidance counselling provision as a result of the policy decisions in Budget 2012.

Whilst a similar study was completed from an eastern perspective by Hui (2002) and Lam and Hui (2010), this study addresses a gap in research on the perceptions of regular teachers of a WSA to guidance counselling from a western perspective.

This case study used a mixed method approach with two phases of data collection. Phase 1 consisted of 30 self reporting online SurveyMonkey questionnaires and Phase 2 collected narratives through interpretive interviews with six regular teachers who volunteered in the survey.

The main themes that emerged in the findings related to the: delivery of a holistic education experience; the pastoral care role of regular teachers in the post-primary school; whole school approach (WSA) to guidance counselling; and the implications of Budget 2012 on the guidance counselling provision in the school.

The conclusions centre around a disconnect between the current shift of focus in policy in Budget 2012 and the resultant inadequate guidelines and training being delivered in the post-primary case school. In addition, the study highlights that regular teachers are willing to participate in a WSA to guidance counselling when they are properly supported by policy and resources. Finally, a number of recommendations are put forward to inform further policy, practice and research.
Chapter 1: Introduction

1.0 Introduction
This chapter outlines the central topic under investigation within the context of relevant theory and practice. It provides a description of the positionality of the researcher within the study and describes the aims and objectives of the research. This chapter also presents a justification for the research and details the plan for the thesis.

1.1 Outline of Research Topic
The main aim of this research is to explore the perceptions of regular teachers of a whole school approach (WSA) to guidance counselling. A critical discourse has developed around the allocation of resources by government departments. Education like other public services has been scrutinised for economic value. Accordingly, Budget 2012 removed the ex-quota status of Guidance Counsellors in post-primary schools (DES 2012a). Furthermore, this is at a time when issues such as depression, self harm, suicidal thinking, anorexia, bulimia and bullying are part of everyday life for a large percentage of post-primary school students (NCGE 2011; UNICEF 2006; Wolfe 2006). Therefore, the pastoral care supports and procedures for supporting students who are at risk is a critical concern in current educational discourse. The ‘pastoral care’ role of the regular teacher is suggested to be an integral aspect of their professional role (Teaching Council 2011, 2001; Best et al 1980). Furthermore, the Children’s First: National Guidelines (2011) and Budget 2012 (DES 2012) have acknowledged the ‘duty of care’ role that regular teachers provide as essential for the delivery of a quality ‘holistic education’. Another area that has emerged in the current discourse is the utilisation of the model of a ‘whole school approach’ (WSA) to guidance counselling. The Department of Education and Skills (DES) post Budget 2012 has presented a WSA to guidance counselling as the panacea for delivering ‘appropriate guidance’ in post-primary schools (DES 2012a). However, there appears to be a deficit in research on the perceptions of regular teachers to a WSA to guidance counselling from a western perspective (Lam and Hui 2010).

1.2 Theoretical and Practice Context of the Study
In a post-primary school educational theory and policies scaffold the delivery of a holistic education. Holistic education is multifarious; consequently this study focuses on the following three areas:
1.2.1 Irish Post-Primary Education

The policy and practice which currently frames the delivery of education in the ‘Delivery of Opportunity in School’ (DEIS) vocational post-primary school has been built on a number of developments dating back to the turn of the 20th century. A number of education reforms were instigated by governments subsequent to the 1924 Act (Adshead 2008, Hyland and Milne 1992). However, it was in the early 1990’s that it moved to the fore of the government statute agenda as a result of high unemployment rates such as 15.75% recorded in 1993 (OECD 2007) similar to today’s rate of 14.2% (CSO 2012). This culminated in one of the most important pieces of legislation, the Education Act 1998, which outlined the statutory responsibility of schools to provide each individual student with “appropriate guidance” (DES 2011, p.1).

‘Appropriate guidance’ is delivered within the context of providing a ‘holistic education’ which “engages with the whole person of each child” (Seed 1992, p.42). A key influence for the provision of ‘appropriate guidance’ is the pastoral care structures delivered in the school (DES 2011; DES 2009; DES 1989). Furthermore, the model of best practice being implemented in a number of countries is a WSA to pastoral care and guidance counselling (DES 2011; OECD 2004; Collins and McNiff 1999). This research study is located in a DEIS vocational post-primary school which has a diverse student body with a high percentage of students who could be referred to as ‘educationally disadvantaged’. Additionally, the ethos of the school is influenced by the national educational discourse centred on the country’s economic recovery and the provision of graduates to fulfil employment shortfalls (DES 2011; NCCA 2011).

1.2.2 Whole School Approach (WSA) to Guidance Counselling

Watts and Kidd (2000, p.489) describe career guidance as an umbrella term and define guidance as a “range of processes designed to enable individuals to make informed choices and transitions related to their educational, vocational, employment and personal development”. In an Irish context the National Guidance Forum (2007) defines guidance as:
Guidance facilitates people throughout their lives to manage their own educational, training, occupational, personal, social, and life choices so that they reach their full potential and contribute to the development of a better society.

(NGF 2007, p.6)

Furthermore, guidance in a post-primary school is referred to as a range of learning experiences that support students developing self management skills around their effective choices (DES 2005b). Counselling is outlined as the guidance practitioner giving "professional support to help those experiencing personal difficulties and to promote their personal growth and well-being" (NCGE 2011, p.4). There are aspects such as counselling and specific guidance criteria that fall under the remit of a trained Guidance Counsellor (IGC 2012b; DES 2011; NCGE 2011). However, the delivery of ‘appropriate guidance’ is recommended to be delivered through a Whole School Approach (DES 2012; NCCA 2007).

In response to Budget 2012 the DES identify WSA to guidance counselling as an ‘established policy’ (DES 2012b). The legislative foundation for this is outlined in the 1998 Act describing ‘appropriate guidance’ requiring a ‘whole school response’ (DES 2005a). Subsequent to this the NCCA (2007) produced a curriculum framework based on a model of infusing guidance themes within academic curriculum and delivering guidance as a whole school activity. This model closely aligns with McGuinness’ (1989) concept of WSA. In contrast to McGuinness’ model, Watkins (1994) posited a more holistic model which encapsulates the social and personal development of the individual student. A WSA model has been recommended to be applied by school management bodies to ensure an appropriate provision of guidance is provided post Budget 2012 (DES 2012b). However, Budget 2012 may affect the uniformity of the WSA model which is currently an integral aspect of the ‘Whole School Guidance Plan’ (IGC 2012b; McCarthy 2012).

1.2.3 Regular Teachers in Post-Primary Education

The impact of Budget 2012 will be widespread and also effects regular teachers. The 'regular teacher' is a classroom based teacher not holding a management role within a school (Hargreaves 1994). The concept of the professional role of regular teachers did not reach fruition until the ‘Teaching Council Act 2001’. The subsequent draft code refers to the professional values and proposed relationships as:

Positive, caring, fair, and committed to the best interests of the pupils/students entrusted to their care.

Acknowledge and respect the uniqueness, individuality and specific needs of pupils/students and promote their holistic development

(Teaching Council 2011, p.7)
These two codes built on earlier educational reforms to firmly establish the classroom and pastoral care work of regular teachers within their professional role (Sexton 2007). The ‘duty of care’ and ‘loco parentis’ aspect of their work has been further reinforced by the Education (Welfare) Act (2000) and Children First: National Guidelines (2011). Furthermore, the duty of care role delivered by regular teachers has been suggested to be a key element in a WSA to guidance counselling. However, the area of counselling comes exclusively under the remit of the qualified Guidance Counsellor.

It has been identified that students respond well to a WSA to guidance counselling when student/teacher relationships are positive (Byrne and Smyth 2010; NEWB 2008; McCoy et al 2006). Furthermore, regular teachers often provide a role in the prevention of student problem’s, personal development and value formation (Lam and Hui 2010). The non-traditional ‘service attribute’ and pastoral care role is acknowledged as a very important aspect of their ‘practitioner’ professional role (Sexton 2007). This study provides an insight into the perceptions of regular teachers in providing this role within the context of a WSA to guidance counselling in one school.

1.3 Positionality of Researcher

The ‘positionality’ or the ‘situated knowledge’ of the researcher is a significant aspect of this study (Thomas 2009). The researcher has worked as a teacher and a guidance counsellor in the post-primary school for over eight years and has a professional working relationship with the participants in the research. Therefore, the researcher is aware of their ‘insider’ practitioner research role. Hence, reflexivity is central to ensuring validity in this research (Loxley and Seery 2008). My personal interest in the topic is around the provision of appropriate support to students in post-primary schools during a crucial part of their development.

1.4 Justification for Research Study

According to the literature there is recognition of the change in the pastoral care role and responsibilities delivered by regular teachers in post primary schools (DES 2012; Teaching Council 2011; Lam and Hui 2010). Budget 2012 instigated a change that directly affects the provision of ‘appropriate guidance’ and places a greater emphasis on the regular teachers’ role in participating in a WSA to guidance counselling. There are a number of studies including Hui (2002) and Lam and Hui (2010) on the factors affecting the involvement of
teachers positioned from an eastern perspective. The justification for this study is that in the opinion of the researcher there is a deficit in empirical research from the perspective of regular teachers and their provision of a WSA approach to guidance counselling from a western perspective. In addition, the study aims to illuminate the perceptions of regular teachers to a WSA to guidance counselling at a time when there is a shift in educational discourse on guidance counselling provision in post-primary schools post Budget 2012.

1.5 Research Aim and Objectives

The main aim of the research was:

To explore the perceptions of regular teachers of a whole school approach (WSA) to guidance counselling in a mid west post-primary school.

Furthermore, the objectives of the research were:

1. To review relevant literature in relation to policy and practice for the delivery of holistic education in a DEIS post-primary school.
2. To illuminate the current perceptions of regular teachers to their current pastoral care role through a mixed method approach.
3. To explore the multifaceted area of a whole school approach (WSA) to guidance counselling in a post-primary school from the perspective of regular teachers.
4. To examine the factors involved in the participation of regular teachers to a WSA to guidance counselling.
5. To extrapolate the impressions of regular teachers to the changes to provision in guidance counselling as a result of Budget 2012.
6. To make a number of recommendations to inform policy, practice and research.

1.6 Methodology

A single case study was the method adopted for the research design frame. Stake’s (1995) ‘intrinsic’ case study model was applied to help explore in-depth the ‘real life’ context of the phenomenon. The data was collected using two phases, Phase 1: thirty self-reporting online SurveyMonkey questionnaires, and Phase 2: six interpretive interviews.
1.7 Structure of Thesis

The structure of this thesis is as follows:

**Chapter One:** introduces the study within the parameters of theory, policy and practice. It describes the positionality of the researcher and outlines the justification for the research. In addition, it describes the methodology aim and objectives and of the study. Finally it contains a detailed outline for each chapter.

**Chapter Two:** discusses relevant literature on the topic. It is presented through three main areas: relevant policies and practices in the area of post-primary vocational education; development and the organisational structures in place for the delivery of a WSA to guidance counselling; and the professional teaching role of regular teachers in delivering on a WSA to guidance counselling.

**Chapter Three:** outlines the methodology and methods that underpinned the research design. It also presents the rationale and the selection for the chosen methods, techniques of data collection and analysis for Phases 1 and 2.

**Chapter Four:** provides a discussion of the main themes which emerged from the primary findings of Phases 1 and 2.

**Chapter Five:** presents a critical interpretation and synthesis of the research findings.

**Chapter Six:** concludes the research study by presenting a synthesis of the findings within the context of the overall aim and objectives. It also outlines the strengths and limitations of the research: implications for policy and practice; recommendations; discusses the positionality of the researcher; and reflexivity in relation to personal learning.

1.8 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to provide an introduction outlining the main aspects of the study. In addition it outlined the central topic within a theoretical framework around theory, policy and practice. It also presented the positionality of the researcher and provides a justification for the research. The introduction also stated the research aim, objectives and a structural description of the thesis. Chapter 2 provides a more in-depth examination of the literature in a theoretical and practice context.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

The area of post-primary education has an intrinsic value and an essential role in the development of young people academically, socially and personally (Smyth and McCoy 2011). The literature on the area of post-primary education and guidance is vast. Therefore the challenge in the review has been to focus on literature pertaining to the area of a whole school approach (WSA) to guidance counselling. The review consisted of engaging with: relevant Irish and international policy documents; journals and research reports; conference reports; literature discussing theories and concepts; documents from education and guidance counselling representative bodies; and finally, relevant web based articles and documents.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section discusses the policy and practice which has shaped the educational landscape in the Irish post-primary school sector. The next section considers the key aspects of a WSA to guidance counselling and the implications of Budget 2012 cutbacks on the provision of guidance counselling. The final section presents a critical analysis of the development of the pastoral care role of the regular teacher.

2.1 Irish Post-Primary Education

This section concentrates on the area of policy and practice relevant to post-primary education. In addition, it considers the key developments within educational reform that currently inform the delivery of a quality holistic education in a DEIS post-primary school.

2.1.1 Policy and Practice 1922-1960

In Ireland and internationally educational policy is at the forefront of Governments’ agendas as they develop policies to drive economic recovery (OECD 2011). Irish post-primary education policy and practice has its roots in the Intermediate Education (Amendment) Act 1924. This Act delivered a new programme for secondary schools and placed an emphasis on academic attainment and grants (Hyland and Milne 1992). Hyland and Milne (1992) argue that the 1924 Act did not extrapolate social issues such as student retention and placed an over emphasis on general centred curriculum.

The issues of vocational education and pupil retention were later addressed in the Vocational Educational Act 1930. There were two main components in the Act: ‘school continuation’ (meaning education to continue and supplement education provided in post-primary) and
‘technical education’ (meaning education pertaining to trades, manufacture and other industrial pursuits). Technical instruction committees were replaced by Vocational Educational Committees (VEC’s) with the remit to set up technical schools to provide a more vocational and technical education (Elsner et al 2008). Even though the 1930 Act formalised the delivery of vocational education, Irish social attitudes at the time tended to place a prestige on local academic based secondary schools (Elsner et al 2008; Hyland and Milne 1992). This continued until the publication of Economic Development or the ‘Whitaker Report’ in 1958 which marked a watershed for the Irish State as it demonstrated the influence economic policy has on education discourse (Adshead 2008). In this period education received significant funding with a renewed focus placed on vocational and technical education. This moved vocational education to the forefront of Irish education for the succeeding decades (Hayes and Bradley 2008). This development was symptomatic of what was happening across Western Europe in the 1950’s, especially in industrial countries such as Britain, France, Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands, which were experiencing rapid growth and a high investment ratio in manufacturing (Aldcroft 1978).

### 2.1.2 Policy and Practice 1960-2012

In the subsequent decades there were a number of other noteworthy reforms:

1. **1967:** The introduction of ‘the free education scheme’ and ‘free transport scheme’ (Coolahan 1981).

2. **1972:** The age for leaving school was raised to fifteen, and in 1970 a document entitled ‘Community School’, helped eliminate the differences between secondary and vocational schools (Hyland and Milne 1992).

The Department of Education enabled VEC’s to manage proposed community colleges in the Vocational Education (Amendment) Act 1970. The year 1973 was significant with Ireland’s entry into the European Community (EC). Additionally, Ireland received development aid for infrastructure and education, and the first Community College opened under the auspice of a VEC (Hyland and Milne 1992).

The White Paper on Educational Development (1980) was produced to consolidate changes to school management, structure, content and methods of funding, although, it was not seen as a definitive document it did contribute to an environment for constructive debate (Hyland and Milne 1992). Ireland in the 1980’s and early 1990’s experienced high rates of
unemployment with a 15.75% rate in 1993 (OECD 2007) which is slightly higher than the current unemployment rate of 14.2% (CSO 2012). Education was brought to the fore of the statute agenda with the most significant Irish educational legislative document being delivered, the Education Act 1998. This was the consolidation document envisaged in the White Paper (DES 1995). The 1998 Act became the main legislative framework for post-primary schools and set down formal provisions in areas such as: the role of the school Inspectorate; funding and grants; the functions for key stakeholders in the schooling system; school planning; and the rights of parents and pupils (Education Act 1998). The 1998 Act established new grounds in the promotion and delivery of equality in education with its aim: “to promote equality of access to and participation in education and to promote the means whereby students may benefit from education” (Education Act 1998, p.10).

The educational legislation and policy documents that followed were not as substantive as the 1998 Act but dealt with issues such as social inclusion, rights of the individual and child protection. The Education (Welfare) Act 2000 provided a framework for issues pertaining to educational disadvantage, school attendance and recognising students being educated outside the traditional school system to ensure that they were receiving their constitutional rights (OECD 2007). The most recent change to the vocational and community school sector was made in 2001, the Vocational Educational Act, which resulted in VEC’s receiving more autonomy in relation to expenditure, governance and management structure.

The area of education policy and practice has often been aligned with economic policy (OECD 2004). Consequently, the current educational discourse is linked closely to the country’s economic recovery and fulfilling economic employment shortfalls (DES 2011; NCCA 2011). Smyth and McCoy (2011) argue that the emphasis of policy response should be on long-standing evidence which may highlight the challenges in addressing the delivery of equal opportunity in Ireland’s post-primary schools.

2.1.3 Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS)

Educational disadvantage is an American term that dates back to the 1960’s US war on poverty (Smyth and McCoy 2009). In the 1990’s the policy focus was on educational inequality with the term ‘educational disadvantage’ becoming common in the discourse and was a key element in the Education Act 1998 (Smyth and Hannon 2000). The 1998 Act outlined the statutory responsibility of the state for providing each individual with an equal
opportunity for accessing and availing of appropriate education. The Department of Education and Science’s (DES) ‘Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools’ (DEIS 2005) set out to address this aim “to ensure that the educational needs of children and young people from disadvantaged communities” are met (DES 2011, p.1). The Action Plan was specifically informed by the definition of “educational disadvantage” as outlined in the Education Act (1998), section 32 (9) as follows: “...the impediments to education arising from social or economic disadvantage which prevent students from deriving appropriate benefit from education in schools”. See Appendix A for a detailed description of the development of the DEIS action plan, the plans rationale and inclusion criteria.

2.1.4 Supports for DEIS post-primary schools
At the core of the DEIS ‘Action Plan’ is a standardised system for assessing a schools’ eligibility for DEIS and to identify the levels of disadvantage within an integrated ‘School Support Programme’ (SSP) (DES 2011). The DEIS interventions and supports available are: additional staffing allocation; funding; teaching hours; Junior Certificate Schools Programme (JCSP); support from a Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) and a School Completion Programme (SCP) (DES 2005a, p.29). See Appendix A for an outline of each of these resource schemes. The advantages for a post-primary school to participate in the DEIS scheme are extensive (DEIS 2011; DES 2011; Barnardos 2009). The DES (2011) Inspectorate reported that participating schools experienced “significant measurable improvement in attendance rates” (DES 2011, p.2). However, supports do not automatically follow the child from primary into post-primary school due to the fragmented nature of the criteria for selecting schools (Barnardos 2009).

2.1.5 Holistic Education
The delivery of education at post-primary involves multiple factors which directly effect the students’ experience of a quality holistic education and how they develop intellectually, socially and personally (Smyth and McCoy 2011). Seed (1992, p.42) defines holistic education as “engaging with the whole person of each child”. Holistic education encompasses a number of “philosophical orientations and pedagogical practices” (Mahmoudi et al 2012, p.178). ‘Holism’ is an ancient Greek concept of ‘holon’ which refers to the universe being made up of integrated wholes that cannot be easily “reduced to a sum of parts” (Miller 2007, p.6). The Greeks saw a holistic approach as an integral part of learning. Miller (2004) argues that Holistic Education cannot be defined as a set of techniques or methods but
that it is better to see it as a ‘paradigm’, a basic set of beliefs and principles. Furthermore, holistic education challenges the current assertion that education and training is to provide individuals suitable for the ‘consumerist culture’ (Miller 2007). In addition there is an attempt to move away from educating the whole human being in an attempt to provide graduates suitable for the workplace that can be easily assessed through ‘standardised tests’ (Miller 2004). Miller’s (2000) proposes a number of levels of wholeness. The following levels may be applicable in an educational setting ‘The Whole Person’ and the ‘Wholeness in Community’:

(i) ‘The Whole Person’ is described as the level at which holistic educators work. The person is viewed as being six essential elements: physical, emotional, intellectual, social, aesthetic and spiritual. He argues that traditionally the intellectual cognitive has been favoured in schools, rather than a balance among the six elements. Additionally, he emphasises the importance of not just seeing the ‘student as a brain to be programmed’, but to see the potential in the individual. Providing for the ‘Whole Person’ within a post-primary school is supporting a balanced education through offering an array of extracurricular activities (ECA) outside of the academic curriculum (Shulruf et al 2008).

(ii) ‘Wholeness in Community’ refers to an emphasis on the ‘quality of human relationships’ within any community such as a school. Furthermore, developing human relationships should be an important objective for educators (Miller 2000, Nava 2001).

These two levels of wholeness can be described as an aspiration within an educational context. However, the literature emphasises the importance of providing a balance between the delivery of academics and pastoral care.

2.1.6 Delivery of Quality Pastoral Care in relation to Whole School Approach
‘Pastoral care’ is distinctly a British notion (Hui 2002) associated with the welfare of the individual. The term ‘pastoral’ is related to the Latin word pastor –a Latin word meaning shepherd. Carroll (2010) contends that an authoritative definition remains elusive. However, a widely accepted definition from a report by the Queen’s Inspectorate into secondary schools
by the UK’s DES (Mannix McNamara et al 2008; Best et al 1995) defines pastoral care as follows:

> Pastoral care is concerned with promoting pupils’ personal and socio development and fostering positive attitudes; through the quality of teaching and learning; through the nature of relationships amongst pupils, teachers and adults other than teachers; through arrangements for monitoring pupils’ overall progress, academic, personal and social; through specific pastoral structures and support systems; through extra-curricular activities and the school ethos. Pastoral care, accordingly, should help a school achieve success.

(UK DES, 1989, p.3)

Best et al (1995) suggest that this UK definition demonstrates the diversity and pervasiveness of pastoral care through the secondary school system. Additionally they refer to ‘care’ as being a verb, and therefore being something that we ‘do’ (Lodge and Watkins 1997). Lodge and Watkins (1997) referred to the ‘do’ as teaching staff providing personal contact and appropriate relationships for students. However, there were early critics (Dooley and Hughes 1980 in Best et al 1980) of the use of the term ‘pastoral care’ in educational settings due to its outdated notions stemming from its New Testament roots within a concept of dependence. The detractors argue that it did not encourage autonomy of the learner or the educators.

In the UK a healthy balance between the delivery of academic subjects and pastoral care was characterised as a challenge, but highly recommended (DES 1989). Watkins (1997) concurs with this view of designing post-primary organisations to deliver a high quality of pastoral care. From an Irish perspective the DES Inspectorate (2009) refers to post-primary schools that had a ‘pastoral care team’ as exemplars of good practice. Therefore, the delivery of quality pastoral care is multifarious and encompasses all post-primary staff in its delivery.

Grove (2004) argues that for the previous two decades there had been an over-arching focus on academic performance within the post-primary school system. He refers to the increasing move by governments towards a ‘whole school approach (WSA)’ to ensure that the welfare of students is being adhered to. There is substantial evidence that cognitive development occurs in schools when there is dynamic multi modal dimension within the interaction with the student’s physical, emotional, spiritual and social development (Jong and Kerr-Roubicek 2007; Weare 2000). Therefore, the quality of a WSA to pastoral care may promote greater mental health and cognitive ability.

2.2 Whole School Approach (WSA) to Guidance Counselling

The literature in the area of WSA to guidance counselling and WSA to pastoral care, share the central aim of students’ personal, social and emotional development (Lohrmann et al
2008; Jong and Kerr-Roubiceck 2007; Rowe et al 2007; Watkins 1994). The advantage of a WSA to pastoral care is it meets the personal, social and academic needs of individual students interwoven in a clear academic curriculum within the organisation of the school (Konu et al 2002). Best et al (1995, p.3) argue that because ‘pastoral care’ is a distinctly British concept its use in other countries would result in “puzzlement”. Therefore, the term of ‘whole school guidance counselling’ has established itself within the educational discourse for the provision of holistic education within post-primary schools. In the literature on WSA to guidance counselling in the Republic of Ireland the term ‘pastoral care’ is often used with ‘guidance’ and ‘counselling’ (Collins and McNiff 1999).

A critical discourse on the provision of ‘appropriate guidance’ and the area of a ‘whole school approach to guidance’ has emerged in the post-primary education sector. This is as a result of the changes made in Budget 2012. The new DES Circular states: “With effect from September 2012, guidance provision is to be managed by schools from within their standard staffing schedule allocation” (DES, 2012, p.4). School managements have now been given the autonomy to deliver guidance counselling in their schools. Prior to this, post-primary schools were allocated ex-quota guidance counselling hours which were utilised by schools to provide a service outside of the teacher student ratio (DES Inspectorate 2009). This has created a paradigm shift in the discourse from individual ‘guidance counselling’ departments to a ‘WSA to the provision of guidance’ (DES 2012a). This section will critically analyse the policies and literature on ‘Guidance Counselling’ and ‘WSA to Guidance’.

2.2.1 Post-Primary Guidance Counselling

As documented by Savickas (2008) vocational guidance counselling was established at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century. In this era there was a societal shift in modern work into jobs with an outcome of jobs into occupations (Savickas 2008). As a result cities and urban living expanded, also the delivery of education was believed to be a “public duty” (Savickas 2008, p.102). A consequence of this was the international development of vocational guidance within educational systems or social welfare organisations. In Europe, vocational guidance was having an ‘auspicious’ start in Switzerland in 1902 when associations were formed to coordinate and guide youths to the world of work (Savickas 2008, p.102). However, Savickas (2008, p.103) postulates that the “actual conception of modern vocational guidance” may have been in Scotland in 1908 when Dr. Ogilvie Gordon pioneered the ‘educational information and employment bureaus’. Dr.
Gordon recommended that school boards establish bureaus to guide school leavers into suitable employment. Similarly in Germany a Department for Vocational Guidance was established in 1908 which offered schools a consultative service for information seekers. Notwithstanding, one of the best documented stories of the beginning of vocational guidance was in 1908 when Frank Parsons established a vocational Bureau in America to provide vocational counselling for youths out of school (Savickas 2008; Baker 1996). Parson saw the role as a dependable source for occupational information which assisted them in making appropriate career choices. Since then this model had been adopted internationally as the function of a Guidance Counsellor (Gerstein et al 2009). However, it also has its limitations and can greatly differ in how it is designed and delivered (OECD 2004).

2.2.2 Definition of Guidance in Post-Primary Education

Watts and Kidd (2000, p.489) define guidance as a “range of processes designed to enable individuals to make informed choices and transitions related to their educational, vocational, employment and personal development”. They argue that within this definition a distinction can be made between personal, educational and vocational guidance and that there are potential ‘fault lines’ between each of these elements. In the literature the term ‘career guidance’ is also used. Watts and Kidd (2000) describe career guidance as an ‘umbrella term’ that can cover progression in learning and work in its various forms.

From an Irish perspective the Education Act (1998) section 9 (C) outlines the statutory responsibility of post-primary schools to assist students in their “educational and career choices” through the provision of “appropriate guidance”. The promotion of appropriate guidance describes supporting the “moral, spiritual, social and personal developments of students” (Education Act 1998 Section 9 (C)). The DES Inspectorate (2005) guidelines relating to students’ access to appropriate guidance served to inform schools and guidance counsellors of such provision. The National Guidance Forum (NGF) was set up to explore how individuals access quality guidance throughout their lives with a main objective to explore how individuals can access ‘quality guidance appropriate to their needs’ (NGF 2007). The Forum’s definition is as follows:

Guidance facilitates people throughout their lives to manage their own educational, training, occupational, personal, social, and life choices so that they reach their full potential and contribute to the development of a better society.

(NGF 2007, p.6)
Guidance in schools is referred to as a range of learning experiences “that assist students to develop self-management skills which will lead to effective choices and decisions about their lives” (DES 2005a, p.4). The DES (2005) guidelines were delivered at a time that coincided with the growing international interest in the relationship between career guidance and public policy (Hui and Lam 2010; CEDEFOP 2004; OECD 2004). The OECD (2004, p.19) definition echoes key elements of the DES (2005) definition, such as the need for the individual to “make educational, training and occupational choices and to manage their careers” and “reflect on their ambitions, interests, qualifications and abilities”. However, the OECD (2004) also emphasises the role of career guidance to inform the labour market and influence its systematic direction.

2.2.3 Counselling in a Post-Primary School Context

The Guidance Counsellor is required to be skilled and competent in providing personal support to students in a post-primary setting during a time of personal crisis. Since the 1960’s academics like Gilbert Wrenn have remarked that secondary schools had become narrowly focused on “remedial needs of a number of students” (Baker 1996, p.8). In 1967, Dinkmeyer in the United States advocated that school counsellors promote positive individual growth (Baker 1996). Additionally, Wrenn and Dinkmeyer made a case that school guidance counsellors were working on the remedial needs of a few students and that it was important to build crisis orientated programs that could empower the counsellor. Notwithstanding, Zaccaria (1969, cited in Baker 1996) argues that the emphasis on developmental counselling should be on preventative counselling.

The term ‘counselling’ in an Irish post-primary context is outlined by the DES (2005a). It is described as the intervention offered at times of personal crisis and as a facility to empower students so that they can “make decisions, solve problems, address behavioural issues, develop coping strategies and resolve difficulties that they may be experiencing” (DES 2005a, p.4). Conversely, counselling has been defined in the context of guidance as: “professional support to help those experiencing personal difficulties and to promote their personal growth and well-being” (NCGE 2011, p.4).

The concentration of crisis counselling in Guidance Counsellors work can differ due to some of the following: organisational pastoral care structures within the school; availability of a chaplain and outside counselling; country policies around the delivery of service; and
professional training received by Guidance Counsellors (Hui and Lam 2010; Gerstein 2009; McCoy et al 2006; OECD 2004; Best et al 1995). The OECD (2004) reports that in a survey of school guidance counsellors in Canada in 1994, 61% named personal crisis counselling as one of their top time-consuming tasks. Similarly, in Norway, 80% of their time was spent dealing with pressing personal and social problems (Teig 2000, cited in OECD 2004, p.40). The report also highlights the tendency for personal counselling to “squeeze attention” from career guidance in reviews in Australia (Queensland), Ireland and Korea as well as other countries (OECD 2004).

The current emphasis in Irish discourse is based around the changes to the allocation for guidance counselling since Budget 2012 (DES 2012b). There is a complex paradigm shift emerging in how vocational guidance and personal/social counselling will be delivered in Irish post-primary education into the future. Before the Budget 2012 announcement the NCGE (Hayes and Morgan 2011) research explored the nature, scope and context of the practice of counselling by guidance counsellors in post-primary schools and recommends:

1. The practice of counselling be clarified and to develop support links with guidance counsellors and outside referral agencies.
2. Provide appropriate professional development.
3. Deliver a written policy on their counselling role.
4. Whole school evaluations should have a critical focus on the practice of counselling.

In response, the DES (2012 p.3) supports the research but clarifies that the counselling aspect of the guidance programme should be delivered within “context of the whole school guidance plan and policies therein”. Accordingly, post-primary management bodies recommend that a successful guidance plan involves school principals and other school staff including (regular teachers) subject teachers through the delivery of a WSA to guidance counselling (ACCS et al 2012). The likelihood is that these recommendations will be followed, given that we now see schools moving into ‘crisis prevention’ work only.

2.2.4 Whole School Approach (WSA) to Guidance Counselling in a Post-Primary School

As stated a WSA to guidance counselling is currently central to the discourse around the delivery of ‘appropriate guidance’. The application of a WSA to guidance is viewed as a “model of good practice” (DES 2009, p.8). Additionally, the DES guidelines make reference to the need for providing appropriate guidance for students using a “whole school response”
(DES 2005a, p.4). The DES (2012b) Circular sets out to inform managerial authorities of post-primary schools the changes outlined in Budget 2012. It refers to WSA as an “established policy” which is delivered through a guidance plan that should clearly outline roles, responsibilities and practices of guidance counsellors, school staff and management. A WSA to guidance counselling is established within policies and literature, but what is the contextual meaning of the term for post-primary education?

Hui and Lam (2010) describe the rationale of a WSA to guidance as complex. This approach was discussed by McGuinness (1989) in his work ‘A Whole School Approach to Pastoral Care’. Hui and Lam (2010) compare McGuinness’ work with Watkins (1994) later paper simply titled ‘Whole-School Guidance?’ Hui and Lam (2010) stipulate that McGuinness’ work emphasised infusing guidance themes into academic curriculum involving all teachers and students. Conversely, Watkins (1994) stresses adopting a ‘whole-curriculum’ approach which addresses the social and personal development of individual students. These perspectives were centrally western based from a ‘humanism’ perspective. Humanism is an outlook that stresses the “potential value and goodness of human” beings and ‘seeks a solely rationale way’ to solve human problems (Hobson 2004, p.211). The humanistic rationale for delivering whole school guidance is that the central focus is in its delivery through a curricular based approach. However, from an Eastern collectivist perspective, an educational policy for a WSA to guidance was introduced in Hong Kong in 1990 (Hong Kong Education Commission, 1990). Collectivism is defined as “a situation in which people belong to in-groups or collectivities which are supposed to look after them in exchange for their loyalty” (Hofstede 1980 in Stewart and Donleavy 1995, p.74). In Hong Kong ‘guidance’ and ‘counselling’ are two distinctly different concepts (Hui 2002). Guidance is referred to ‘Fuh-douh’ meaning ‘assist and guide’ and aims to help students as a ‘whole-person development’ (Hui 2002). However, the counselling element aims to help students in times when they are distressed and confused (Hui 2002). Hong Kong’s Eastern philosophies are different to Western philosophies, such as Ireland, but the central concepts of organising structures to support the personal, social, vocational development of students are inherently one of the same (Lam and Hui 2010; Hui 2002; Collins and McNiff 1999; Lang et al 1994; Best 1983; Marland 1974).
2.2.5 An Eastern Perspective (Hong Kong) of a WSA to Guidance Counselling

In the Hong Kong Commission’s (1990) educational policy on whole school guidance, teachers and school personnel are directed to get involved in student guidance responsibilities. The rationale of a WSA was to foster student development not necessarily curricular based only in 2007. An audit of the policy found that the majority of school Principals had adopted the approach in 2007. However, Hui (2002) finds that regular teachers were expected to support guidance counselling without their involvement being specified. Hui’s main argument was that the concept of a WSA to guidance counselling was complex but has developed from a vague unidentified area into a coherent set of concepts. The limitations of Hui’s (2002, p.78) research was that the sample group consisted of “teachers with specific guidance responsibilities”, and therefore, the study did not explore the views of ‘regular teachers’ on a WSA to guidance counselling. Hui (2002) argues and that there were very few studies actually investigating the perceptions of teachers and that a further study was warranted in this area.

A further qualitative study by Lam and Hui (2010) examined the issues that influence the involvement of teachers in guidance and counselling in a whole school approach. The key elements within this study were: that the 12 teachers’ interviewed were responsible for the delivery of guidance and counselling; eastern collectivism approach versus western humanistic approach; schools had a culture which they referred to as “love and care”; and the structure of the organisation sets out a field of care from teachers who support the mental health of students (Lam and Hui 2010, p. 203). The limitation of this subsequent study is that it reflects the opinion of a limited number of teachers, and therefore, is not representative of all teachers in Hong Kong. In addition, as participants were volunteers, their altruism may have had an effect. Furthermore, the researchers recommend a further study to be undertaken involving regular teachers in a western country. Consequently, the aim of this current study is to examine the perceptions of regular teachers of a WSA to guidance counselling in an Irish post-primary school.

2.2.6 A Western (Irish) Perspective of a WSA to Guidance Counselling

The model of WSA to guidance counselling that is currently being proposed in Ireland aligns with western Humanism and the earlier work of McGuiness (1989) and Watkins (1994) is based on integrating guidance within the curriculum. A whole-school approach is being
adopted in countries such as Canada (Quebec) and Luxemborg and is based on a strong community partnership in which guidance is at the “heart of it” (OECD 2004, p.47).

The NCCA’s (2007) offers a framework of curricular experiences and highlights the responsibility of the whole school community in providing appropriate guidance. See Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 ‘The Guidance Wheel’ (NCCA 2007, p.6)

Figure 2.1 provides a graphical representation of a whole school guidance wheel which the NCCA (2007, p.6) suggests present opportunities for a “multi-faceted, collaborative approach for the guidance provision”. The figure shows the three areas of school guidance personal guidance, educational guidance, and career development and the interrelatedness of other stakeholders in providing a guidance provision.

2.2.7 Implications of a Whole School Approach (WSA)

There are implications for all post-primary school stakeholders in the delivering of a WSA to guidance counselling. The OECD (2004) refers to implications of WSA in relation to the provision of appropriate staff training and the distribution of resources. Additionally, the Hayes and Morgan (2011) highlight the following:

(i) Career Guidance Counsellors should be consulted in relation to curriculum and the delivery of the guidance service.
(ii) There are implications for school managements, teachers and community resources.

(iii) The importance of integrating key guidance counselling elements into a coherent programme is recommended.

Likewise, the DES (2009) emphasises a concern around coherent and integrated guidance planning and recommends that it should be included in a school's whole school planning process. More recently, management authorities have been informed to apply a WSA to the provision of guidance to maximise resources in a post-primary school (DES 2012b). The 'Framework for considering Provision of Guidance in Post-Primary Schools-September 2012' reinforces that guidance is a whole school activity and all stakeholders should be involved in its planning and delivery (ACCS et al 2012). Nevertheless, the IGC argue that the 2012 Budget changes will result in a lack of uniformity and a reduction in standards of guidance provision which will have detrimental implications for students (IGC 2012b).

Additionally, McCarthy (2012) contends that the cuts places the Irish guidance counselling provision and education system back to the 1960's; that the economic benefits are short term and will affect social outcomes; guidance counselling will move into the private sector benefiting those who can afford it; and finally, that the equality in education was no longer a priority of the DES. The literature emphasises that effective whole school guidance is reliant on the Guidance Counsellor having an integral role and the proposed changes may directly affect the standard of the whole school guidance programme (IGC 2012b).

2.3 Regular Teachers in Post-Primary Education

In this section the relevant literature and policies in relation to the role of 'regular teachers' within a WSA to guidance counselling will be discussed. The ACCS et al (2012) framework suggests that delivering a WSA to guidance counselling is multifaceted and has implications for regular teachers. This is explicated in this section.

2.3.1 Definition of 'regular teacher'

In the organisational structure of an Irish post-primary school teachers fulfil a number of different roles. The generic term used for an educator in a post-primary school is teacher. The term 'teacher' is defined in accordance with the Teaching Council Act (2001) as a "person who:

(a) ....before the establishment day has achieved the qualifications required by the Minister for employment as a teacher in a recognised school, or
(b) ...in the case of a person to whom paragraph (a) does not apply, is eligible for registration under section 31(5).

(Teaching Council Act 2001, p. 7)

In section 31(5) the ‘person’ needs to fulfil conditions such as having a relevant qualification, teaching experience, medical fitness, and evidence of good character. Hargreaves (1994, p.99) uses the term “regular” teacher in his discussion on teachers work in postmodern times. In the Irish system ‘regular teachers’ are classified as subject teachers who do not perform specific roles such as Principal, Deputy Principal, Assistant Principals or Year Heads.

2.3.2 Historical Policy and Regulatory Reforms for Regular Teachers

Ireland has been noted as being at the forefront in the professionalisation of teaching (Drudy 2000). Accordingly, policies and numerous acts have influenced the professional role of regular teachers. Currently, education policy is central to the implementation of the programmes for sustainable growth and prosperity (DES 2012c). Historically, Irish education policies and reforms were influenced by the development of the Free-State and economic variables (Coolahan 1981). The governance and regulation of the teaching role has its origins in the Intermediate Education Act (1914). However, a registration council for secondary teachers was not established until 1918 (Coolahan 1981). A formal Registration Council for post-primary teachers was established in 1926, whose regulations identified the foundation studies of education (Coolahan 1981) and demonstrated an irreverence for the role that curriculum had in the education. Post-primary education developed through the subsequent decades without any major educational acts and reforms affecting the delivery of education and the role of the teacher. In 1974 a planning committee reported to the Minister for Education on the setting up of a teachers’ council and its main role was to advise the minister on teacher education and supply (Coolahan 1981). The OECD (1991, p.5) argues that consecutive Irish governments ignored educational reform and described the Irish system as “outdated” and “in need of change”. The OECD report highlights that methodologies utilised by teachers were conservative and the relationship between educators and students was authority-based. This helped generate a shift in discourse towards a more holistic inclusive style of teacher student relationship. Leonard and Gleeson (1999) refer to a turning point occurring when a colloquium for educators was held in 1987 entitled ‘Teacher Education-the Challenge of Change’. As a result new ideas emerged including Junior Certificate programme introduced in 1989, and the promotion of active learning and holistic education. Finally, the disregarded calls for change to educational policy progressed into

The Education Act 1998 delivered a constitutional structure to the reforms occurring in education and made specific reference to the professional standing and role of regular teachers “to promote best practice in teaching methods with regard to the diverse needs of students and the development of the skills and competences of teachers” (Act 1998, Section 6(g)). The 1998 Act also outlines the functions of the DES Inspectorate which includes advising schools and teachers on the provision of education and the delivery of quality and effectiveness of individual teachers (Act 1998, Section 2 No 51(13)).

2.3.3 The Professionalisation of Regular Teachers

The professionalism of teachers was further developed in the ‘Teaching Council Act 2001’.

The main functions of the Teaching Council are:

- The regulation of the teaching profession.
- The professional conduct of teachers and promotion of Continuing Professional Development (CPD).
- To establish and promote codes of ‘professional conduct’ which shall include ‘standards of teaching, knowledge, skill and competence’ and the improvement of standards in the profession.

(Teaching Council Act 2001 7 (2) (b)).

With the establishment of the Teaching Council as a statutory body in 2006, the first professional codes of conduct quickly followed. A Draft Code, 2nd edition, was published in 2011. This Code refers to the fundamentals of teaching professional values and relationships, outlining where teachers are required to:

Be positive, caring, fair, and committed to the best interests of the pupils/students entrusted to their care. Acknowledge and respect the uniqueness, individuality and specific needs of pupils/students and promote their holistic development.

(Teaching Council 2011, p.7)

As a result pastoral care was positioned as a high professional value for regular teachers by the Teaching Council and brought a sharper focus to the professional status of teaching (Sexton 2007). Sexton (2007) applies two approaches to the evaluation of the professionalism of teachers. The first, the ‘traditional approach’, can be traced to the work of Flexner (1915) and was utilised by Parsons (1954), Leggatt (1970), Tominson (1978), Downie (1990), and Holye and John (1995), and others. The central premise of the traditional approach is that it views the “true (alternatively ‘full’, ‘classical’ or ‘established’)” professionalism as a list of attributes (Sexton 2007, p.80). These attributes are not generated from notional views of what the profession ought to be, but by making reference to other
occupations such as medicine and law, which are recognised as professions by ‘common consent’ (Sexton 2007).

The second approach is to view the professionalism of an occupation solely by reference to its own unique attributes and this approach is essentially concerned with ‘practitioner professionalism’ (Sexton 2007). In Ireland the professionalism of a teacher has been attributed to a qualification, membership of a professional body or what happens in the classroom (Coolahan 1987). Sexton (2007) argues that it is time for teachers to stop benchmarking itself against the ‘classical professions’ and, rather emphasise the unique characteristics of its own profession. He presents five attributes which emerged from his examination of the literature:

“The presence of a knowledge base, an intellectual dimension involving a period of extended training or education, a sense of responsibility and an accompanying code of ethics, a spirit of altruism, and a high degree of autonomy”

(Sexton 2007, p.83)

Sexton further reduces these down to three (reworking of Hoyle & John’s (1995) analysis) to: knowledge attributes (knowledge base and training); the autonomy attribute; and the service attributes (altruism, responsibility and ethics). Sexton (2007) states that altruism is a characteristic of second level teachers and was viewed as a key attribute of their professionalism. Similarly, an OECD (1991) report described the autonomy of Irish teachers as ‘legendary’. The DES established a review panel to consider the structure of initial teacher education (ITE) provision in Ireland (DES 2012c). The DES (2012c) report was established to manage a review on the structure of Initial Teacher Education (ITE). The report recommended the following:

1. Teacher education should be facilitated in six universities.
2. The strengthening of the school placement experience at undergraduate level through the development of partnerships and linking in with the ‘Teaching Council’s policy on the continuum of Teacher Education’ and ‘Initial Teacher Education: Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers’.
3. Finally, it recommends setting up systematic links to clinical practice in field schools. In addition, it is envisaged that teachers will familiarise themselves with current research and develop practitioner research on critical areas of teacher education.
The DES review panel stated that aspects such as curricula, policy, funding or the continuing professional development of teacher training were “difficult to ignore” (DES 2012c, p.6). However, the panel acknowledge that these aspects were outside of their remit.

Other acts and policies have reinforced a paradigm shift away from an overarching concentration on curriculum and academics. The Education (Welfare) Act (2000) emphasises the importance of providing training to regular teachers relating to matters of school attendance and conduct of teachers. The NEWB (2008) refers to teachers having a professional ‘duty of care’ to address issues such as bullying. It describes ‘duty of care’ as a professional duty that should be reflected in a teacher’s training, skill and knowledge. It also classifies the subject teacher as the “front-line” source of help for students (NEWB 2008, p.8). Additionally the ‘Children First: National Guidelines’ (Department of Children and Youth Affairs 2011), which aims to promote the safety and well being of children, proposes that regular teachers are the main care-givers to children outside the family home. The NCCA (2004, p.3) research into students’ experiences in starting post-primary school suggested that “positive teacher student interaction” played a crucial role in the transition. In low performing disadvantaged schools, policies which encourage positive teacher-student relationships can help individual students develop and as a result can affect the whole school environment (OECD 2012).

The literature on WSA to guidance counselling refers to the influential role that a regular teacher has on a student’s experience in school (Lam and Hui 2010; McCoy et al 2006; Hui 2002; Best et al 1980). McCoy et al (2006) highlights that it can be very affective when regular teachers have a positive attitude towards teacher involvement in WSA working with issues such as bullying and self esteem. Similarly, in their study students reported that they would approach a regular teacher over a teacher in a specific disciplinary role about a personal issue. The NEWB (2008, p.16) states that where relationships of trust were fostered students were able to “grow stronger through the process”. In a survey of 1,634 students on barriers to feeling good in school by Gordon and Grant (1997) students perceived barriers as stress of too much work, teachers’ attitudes and doing badly in school. Likewise Smyth et al (2004) found that poor student-teacher relations in school were a high contributor to absenteeism from school. Moreover, negative interaction with teachers is associated with poor academic achievement and early school leaving (Byrne and Smyth 2010; Smyth 1999).
 Additionally, teachers link ‘teacher/student relationships’ as very high in how they view themselves as professionals (Sexton 2007).

2.3.4 Role of regular teachers in the context of Whole School Approach (WSA) to Guidance Counselling.

The role of regular teachers and education is influenced by variables such as social and economic policy (Coolahan 1981). Mr. Tharman Shammugaratnam, Singapore Minister for Education, refers to the teachers’ “caring eye” and the passion they put into nurturing their students and even goes as far as saying “our teachers are simply the most important asset we have” (Darling-Hammon and Rothman 2011, p. 33). The guidance provision changes detailed in Budget 2012 has instigated a renewed focus on the role of regular teachers providing personal, social and vocational support. This responsibility has been referred to by the Minister of Education and Skills, Ruairi Quinn, post Budget 2012 as a regular teacher’s “duty of care”. A regular teacher’s duty of care role is often referred to as ‘loco parentis’ and teachers fulfill this role when students are under their care (Best 1990). This would commonly include a guidance role as well as a modelling and sponsorship roles (Watts 1986, cited in Watts and Kidd 2000).

2.3.5 Regular teachers in relation to Vocational Guidance Provision

A comprehensive guidance approach demands that subject teachers be involved in offering guidance and adapt “guidance into their teaching pedagogy” (Aluede et al 2007, p.190). The role of regular teachers in the practice of guidance counselling in schools is outlined by the DES (1996) as follows;

providing pupils with advice and information in relation to their subject discipline; delivering on formal responsibilities through management, middle management, pastoral care and home school liaison positions. Individual teachers may be sought out by pupils on an informal basis for advice and information.

(DES 1996, p. 5)

CEDEFOP (2004) reports that regular teachers often include career related issues and themes in their subjects. However, CEDEFOP’s survey found that the results were far from satisfactory, with countries (e.g. Austria, Denmark, Norway, Sweden) reporting that students were failing in seeing the connections between different elements of programmes and guidance. Likewise the OECD (2004) finds that having regular teachers deliver guidance in their subject teaching or in an ad-hoc manner was proving to be disconnected in its delivery. It was seen from experiences in Austria and Norway that this integrated model requires a high level of coordination and support to be effective (OECD 2004). Accordingly, in the
Netherlands the inclusion of career education in regular teacher’s teaching was largely withdrawn. However, where a course delivers mandatory career education as stand alone, separate course or subsumed (for example Australia, Austria, the Czech Republic and the United Kingdom) the quality can be easily monitored (OECD 2004).

In the Republic of Ireland career education is not a mandatory part of the curriculum at present. Additionally, subject teachers are not required to help students to link between studies and after school careers as part of their duties (OECD 2002). However, regular teachers are currently delivering in areas that support a WSA to guidance counselling through teaching subjects such as Civil Social and Political Education (CSPE), Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), Religious Education (RE), Home Economics, and Physical Education (PE). Also regular teachers may co-ordinate guidance planning with work experience in programmes such as the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA), the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) and Transition Year (TY). The OECD (2004) highlights that in Ireland, similar to Korea and Luxembourg, these programmes are left to individual schools to offer, therefore, the quality is not easy to monitor.

2.3.6 Regular teachers in relation to counselling

The NCGE (2011) details the competences required for the delivery of counselling in a post-primary setting and state that an individual has to have attained specialised counselling training. Accordingly, it found that some students were not comfortable meeting with a subject teacher in a counselling role. In 2007 the Teachers Union of Ireland (TUI) in a response to the NCCA (2007) outlined that they were in favour of a cross curricular approach to guidance and acknowledged that teachers have appropriate skills in the provision of general guidance. However, it stressed that this was not to be at the expense of students availing of one to one sessions as “deemed appropriate by the qualified Guidance Counsellor(s)” (TUI 2007, p.4).

Large post-primary schools have regular teachers in teams providing social, personal and vocational support. The Child Protection Procedures (DES 2011) accentuates that regular teachers should be aware of anti bullying policies. Accordingly, the role of regular teachers is often to participate in anti bullying teams, offer initial explorative work and refer in cases of child safety issues (Children First: National Guidelines 2011). McCoy et al (2006) argue that students respond well to a WSA and it can be very effective when students are reluctant
to approach a Guidance Counsellor. Accordingly, they report that some students would approach a form teacher for support and 15% stated that they would go to a teacher. However, Finney (2006, p.24) reports that teachers when approached by students looking for support expressed they felt that they were “just a teacher” and should “leave it the experts”. Kuijpers et al (2009) postulate that a reason why regular teachers felt inadequate in student counselling is as a result of management differentiating specific roles for staff in post-primary schools. Lam and Hui (2010, p.68) highlight that that the role of regular teacher’s in a whole school approach to guidance counselling involves remedial work such as the prevention of students’ issues escalating, “personal development” and “value formation”. Moreover, a recurrent theme in an earlier study was a “lack of skill” and competences in handling student personal issues (Hui 2002, p.227). Another key variable present in the literature is in relation to teacher attitudes and time. Fox and Butler (2007, p.98) highlight that pupils who want the chance to discuss problems with a teacher were met with a teacher who “under-rated this type of support”.

2.4 Conclusion

The environment of a post-primary school is multifaceted and challenging. There is recognition in research and literature that the teaching profession has had to adapt to wider societal changes which have had a direct influence on the education landscape (DES 2008). Additionally, the policies delivered (The Teaching Council Act 2001; Education Act 1998) have helped to regulate the profession and capture the evolving role of the regular teacher beyond an overarching curricular/discipline role to a more holistic relationship with students. It is apparent that regular teachers now have a statutory requirement around a duty of care and child safety (Department of Children and Youth Affairs First 2011). The changes in Budget 2012 and the evolving professional role of the regular teacher have implications for the provision of a WSA to guidance counselling. It is evident from the literature review that this is a complex issue, hence the need for an examination of the current situation. The aim of this research is to address these implications through illuminating the current professional role that regular teachers have in the delivery of WSA to guidance counselling in one post-primary school. In addition, it aims to elucidate the issues that influences their participation in a WSA. Chapter 3 presents the methodology and methods adopted to address this issue.
Chapter 3: Methodology

3.0 Introduction
The purpose of this chapter is to outline the methodology and methods adopted for this research. It presents the primary questions and secondary questions that underpin the study. This chapter also presents the selection and rationale of the chosen methods, data collection and analysis underpinned by a central philosophy.

3.1 Identification of Research Questions
Bryman (2007) refers to formulating a research question as the most critical and difficult part of research design. Blaikie (2000, p.58) states that a research project is “built on the foundations of the research questions”. However, Merriam (2001) argues that before an appropriate research methodology is selected that it is important to select a number of key questions that address the phenomena being researched. Similarly, de Vaus (2001, p.9) argues that the function of a research design is to ensure that all data collected enables the answering of the initial question as “unambiguously as possible”.

3.1.1 Primary research question
The primary research question is ‘what are the perceptions of regular teachers of a whole school approach (WSA) to guidance counselling in a mid west post-primary school?’ This research involved an investigation into the issues that influenced the participation of regular teachers in a WSA to guidance counselling. As the area of post-primary guidance counselling is multifaceted, a critical analysis of each structural context and stakeholders was undertaken in the investigation. Accordingly, a number of secondary research questions were used to address these additional areas.

3.1.2 Secondary research questions
1) How has the historical development of policy and practice in post-primary education influenced the holistic education of the individual student?
2) What are the key issues involved for the delivery of a WSA to guidance counselling in a post-primary school that has a DEIS allocation?
3) What are the issues that currently affect how a regular teacher delivers a pastoral care role in a post primary school?
4) What are the perceptions of regular teachers on their role in delivering a WSA to guidance counselling?
5) What are the impressions of regular teachers to the changes made in Budget 2012?

In choosing a research design careful consideration was given to the appropriate research paradigm that will address these research questions (Blaikie 2000).

3.2 Methodology and Methods

Methodology refers to the ‘study of method’ and there are a number of different perspectives in the field of research (Thomas 2009). However, Thomas suggests that methodology does not simply refer to the presentation of method, but the discussion of its purpose for supporting the inquiry and the reasons for its selection. Furthermore, Alastalo (2008) describes methodology as a normative attempt to discover and discuss the good and the bad practices of research methods. Methods are the techniques of “gathering and analysing data” (Alastalo 2008, p.26). Tight (2003) argues that methodologies are more contested than methods as a result of methodologies being based on the central philosophies and value position of the researcher. Therefore, the selection and rationale of the chosen methods must support the central philosophy.

3.3 Selection of Appropriate Research Paradigm

3.3.1 Definition of Research Paradigms

There are predominantly two main types of research approaches in education and guidance counselling research. They are positivist (quantitative) and interpretivist (qualitative). Kuhn (1962) describes a ‘paradigm’ as a way of observing or researching phenomenon through an accepted ‘model’, ‘pattern’ or as a ‘world view’ through a shared belief system or set of principles. The research topic involved exploring the perceptions of regular teachers, therefore the methods utilised were selected to support the collection of rich relevant data.

As a result of engaging with the literature I chose a mixed method approach primarily hinged on an interpretivist paradigm (Cohen et al 2011; Mertens 2005; Punch 2005). I believe the strength of this approach was that it supported the collection of rich data through the words, thoughts, images and social structures (Cohen et al 2011; Thomas 2009). However, in areas where I felt more defined variables were required I applied a positivist paradigm.

3.3.2 Positivist (Quantitative) Research

The positivist paradigm is referred to under a number of different headings such as traditional, conventional, scientific, positivist, empiricist and hypothetic-deductive (Merriam 2001). Punch (2005, p.3) defines quantitative research as “empirical research where the data
is in the form of numbers”. Accordingly, Winterbottom (2009) describes a quantitative paradigm as an approach to using measurements and numbers to formulate and inform test ideas. Cohen et al (2011, p.15) argues that the difficulty with this approach is that it regards human behaviour as passive and in ‘essence controlled’. Accordingly, the findings for areas such as education or counselling can frequently be banal, trivial and consequently of little significance. Therefore, rather than determining cause and effect we might be more interested in uncovering the meaning of a phenomenon for those involved through qualitative research (Merriam 2011).

3.3.3 Qualitative (Interpretivist) Research
Alasuutari et al (2008) argue that the positivist’s methods and techniques came into scrutiny in the 1960’s and 1970’s when looking at the human condition. This resulted in social scientists developing qualitative research in its own right. Qualitative research is where the researcher relies on the views of the participants and thus interprets these views through a “reality driven approach” through a usually richer in language sense than the positivist data (Bassey 1999, p.43). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) offer a generic definition of qualitative research as:

\[
\text{a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible.}
\]

(Denzin and Lincoln 2005, p.3)

Qualitative supporters uphold the ideal that the behaviour of individuals can only be properly understood by the researcher being subjective rather than objective (Cohen et al 2011). In qualitative research the researcher is the ‘primary instrument’ (Merriam 2009, p.15). However, Merriam (2009) suggests that the human instrument has shortcomings and biases that may impact on the study. She argues that it is therefore important to identify and monitor these “subjectivities” and how they are affecting the collection and interpretation of the data.

3.3.4 Mixed Method Approach
A mixed method approach is a ‘synthesis’ method which applies strengths from interpretivist and positivist research paradigms (Johnson et al 2007). Tashakkori and Creswell define mixed methods as:

\[
\text{Research in which the investigator collects and analyzes data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and qualitative approaches or methods in a single study or program of inquiry.}
\]

(Tashakkori and Creswell, 2007, p.4)
The design of the mixed method approach utilised was a ‘multilevel mixed designs’ also termed ‘hierarchical’ (Teddlie and Tashakkori 2009). Multilevel mixed design is where different types of data (both quantitative and qualitative) are integrated at different levels. The main strengths of selecting this approach was that it allowed for the collection of statistical data and in-depth data around the expansive issues involved in teachers perceptions of a WSA to guidance counselling.

3.4 Research Design Frame: Case Study

Central to the research is a real-life phenomenon about the perceptions of regular teachers of a DEIS school. Careful consideration was given to the appropriate design frame that allowed for an in-depth enquiry encompassing contextual conditions. A design frame is a plan for research that is adopted, a ‘scaffold’ in which the researcher can structure and consolidate decisions within the design (Thomas 2009).

3.4.1 Definition of a Case Study

The research design frame approach chosen is a case study. Simons (2009) defines a case study as an:

In-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project policy, institution programme or system in a ‘real life’ context.

(Simons 2009, p.21)

Yin (2009) argues that definitions like Simons’ often merely cite a case topic such as an institution programme or a particular project policy, and are insufficient in establishing a definition of a case study as a research method. Therefore, Yin defines a case study as:

Empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in-depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident

(Yin 2009, p.18)

The contemporary phenomenon in this study was the perception of teachers to a WSA to guidance counselling in a post-primary school. This case study is based on Stake’s (1995) ‘intrinsic model’ where a study contains a case where the interest is for rich intrinsic pictures and different insights within one school site. The strength of a case study is that it may not inform like an experiment can about causation but can offer a “rich picture with many kinds of insights” from various angles (Thomas 2011, p.21). Case studies can also provide insights into real life situations where phenomenon and context are not always distinguishable (Yin 2009). Furthermore, case studies can cope with technically distinctive situations with
multiple sources of evidence and with data “needing to converge in a triangulating fashion” (Yin 2009, p.18).

Nevertheless, the limitations of a case study are that results may not be generalised except where others see their application. Similarly, it is not easily open to cross checking and can be prone to problems of observer bias or subjective judgements (Cohen et al 2011; Yin 2009; Merriam 2001). Notwithstanding, Stake (1995) argues the credibility lies in the study of the complexities and particularities of a single case and its activity within an ‘important circumstance’ as opposed to generalisation. Yin (2009) contends that a case study is like an experiment and does not only represent a ‘sample’, but that the goal is for it to expand and generalise theories. Consequently, this research is applying a case study frame to examine the complexity and particularity around regular teacher’s perceptions in one post-primary school. The transferability of the research is to assist in expending general theories around the role of regular teachers in the delivery of a WSA to guidance counselling, rather than to postulate generalisations from a single case.

3.5 Data Collection

The purpose of this section is to present the methods of data collection utilised for the research. As there are a number of data collection methods, a priority was to assess the content validity (Mertens 2005) of each method and evaluate which methods would provide the most appropriate data. The timeline of Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the data collection is shown in Figure 3.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 1: 27/3/12</th>
<th>27/3/12</th>
<th>28/3/12-19/4/12</th>
<th>Phase 2: 23/4/12</th>
<th>25/4/12</th>
<th>24/4/12-15/5/12</th>
<th>23/5/12-30/5/12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Received Permission from Gate Keeper</td>
<td>Pilot Survey</td>
<td>SurveyMonkey (Online Survey)</td>
<td>Random Sampling for Interview</td>
<td>Pilot Interview</td>
<td>Individual Interviews (Regular teachers)</td>
<td>Member Checking (Interviewees view transcripts)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 3.1 Timeline of the Collection of Data

Cohen et al (2011) recommend applying two data collection methods to capture the many variables within a single case. Accordingly, questionnaires (Phase 1) and semi-structured interviews (Phase 2) were chosen to collect the relevant data.
3.5.1 Access

The case site was an Irish post-primary school. The ‘Gate Keeper’ (Mautner et al 2002, p.67) for my case study was the Principal of the school. A subject information sheet was given to the Principal and he summarily signed a consent form on the 27th of March (see Appendices B & C). The subject information sheet sets out clearly the intentions and structure of the research. Robson (2002) highlights that if the researcher has clear research intentions and structure then the gate keeper can gain a good understanding and hence may be more favourable in granting access.

Phase 1: The 30 regular teachers were sourced from the school website which outlines their specific role in the school and as a result their eligibility for the study. On the 28th of March the respondents were accessed with a subject information email with the SurveyMonkey link attached (see Appendix D). Phase 2: The interviewees were accessed through an interview consent item on the survey. In total six out of fourteen participants were randomly selected on the 23rd of April, contacted, and presented with subject information sheets and consent forms (see Appendix F-G). The dates for the interviews were negotiated. The interviewees were contacted the day before the interview as a reminder and to adhere to research time parameters.

3.5.2 Phase One Method: Online Survey

(i) Sampling Strategy for Survey

The representative sampling was made up of regular teachers as defined in the literature working in a bounded case site (one post-primary school). The sample group were from the post-primary school in which the researcher works as a Guidance Counsellor. The purposive sampling size was 30 regular teachers for the survey. Teddie and Yu 2007 (cited in Cohen et al 2011) describe purposive sampling as a means of including representatives that may allow a focus on a case. Hence, I feel that purposive sampling allowed me to access an appropriate group. However, Teddie and Yu (2007, cited in Cohen et al 2011, p.156) argue that a weakness of this approach is that on one hand it delivers depth for the research while on the other hand it provides a lesser breadth to the study.

(ii) Piloting of the Survey

The SurveyMonkey questionnaire was piloted on the 28th of March by sending the email with the attached survey to five members of staff who were not regular teachers in the school.
Oppenheim (1992, cited in Cohen et al 2011) suggests that every element of a questionnaire should be piloted with nothing excluded. Additionally, Cohen et al (2011) highlight that pretesting a questionnaire is extremely important for its success. Additionally, a pilot can increase the “reliability, validity and practicability of the questionnaire” (Wilson and Mclean, 1994; Morrison, 1993; Oppenheim, 1992, cited in Cohen et al 2011, p.402). A key piece of feedback from the pilot was that two of the respondents who opened the survey using the search engine Google Chrome experienced a problem. The issue was that the survey’s appearance was different and the response boxes were in the incorrect place which would confuse the respondents. However, it could be opened using internet explorer. I amended the email and included a recommendation for the survey to be opened using Internet Explorer. Consequently, the piloting of the survey highlighted an issue that would have affected the reliability, validity and response rate.

(iii) SurveyMonkey Online Questionnaire

There has been much advancement in the use of internet based surveys to conduct research. Internet based surveys have moved away from being in email form to being email-plus-attachments, which redirect the respondent to speciality survey websites (Cohen et al 2011). An internationally popular computer based survey is ‘SurveyMonkey’ which is accessible at www.SurveyMonkey.com. Survey Monkey is utilised internationally for all types of research (Symonds 2011). On the first phase of data collection SurveyMonkey was utilized for creating, delivering and recording the participant’s responses (see Appendix E).

(a) The strengths of using SurveyMonkey

SurveyMonkey provided a solution to the collection of data under a restricted research time frame (Wright 2005). It did not require software or code installation; are user friendly for the respondents; and have an added visual attraction. (Symonds 2011). Internet based surveys are user friendly for the respondents and have an added visual attraction. Therefore, this may have contributed to the 100% response rate from the regular teachers (Cohen et al 2011). In addition, it did not require a large financial or time investment on behalf of the researcher (Symonds 2011).

(b) Limitations of using SurveyMonkey

Symonds (2011) highlights a number of limitations to the application of a SurveyMonkey:
1. It relies on the participants being proficient in computer applications; ability to open attachments; and it takes time to complete.

2. Where answers were mandatory the usefulness of the responses depends on respondents including enough detail. There were a number of responses in the survey that were not useful. One respondent answered ‘yes’ to an open question which required a more in-depth response (see appendix J, Q:7).

3. The SurveyMonkey software records the start and finish times. However, the data is not analysed. Therefore, it is hard to compare with traditional methods in relation to actual completion rates.

4. A number of the respondents highlighted that there wasn’t a facility to return to an unfinished survey, like you can with a paper survey. This was seen as an irritation by the respondents.

These are a number of key principles that were applied to help with these limitations (Cohen et al 2011; Dillman and Bowker 2000; Dillman et al 1999):

1. Placed interest based questions at the beginning of the survey.

2. Circumvented problems arising from participants not having expertise in computer usage by having clear instructions in how to complete the survey in the email.

3. Ensured that the level of the expertise of the respondents was appropriate for the questionnaire.

4. Had clear and concise questions. Avoided complicated questions that may cause problems.

5. Ensured that the layout of the questionnaire was similar to a paper format as respondents may have been familiar with the style.

Watt (1997) argues that response rates of internet based surveys are typically lower than paper based surveys. Solomon (2001) contends that this may be averted by sending a personal email. In this research a group email was utilised to support the internet based survey. Gwartney (2007, cited in Cohen et al 2001) suggests that internet based surveys are most appropriate for closed populations for example employees in a particular organisation. The respondent group have completed internet based SurveyMonkey questionnaires before
and all work in a particular organisation. Consequently, this may have supported the 100% response rate.

(iv) **Survey Design and Administration**

The survey was formulated with quantitative and qualitative questions. Cohen et al (2011) highlight that a less structured approach can be applied when there is a smaller sampling size. Accordingly, a semi-structured survey was utilised. The type of questions ranged from multiple choice, rating scales and open questions (see Appendix E). The use of open qualitative questions can ‘capture the specificity of a particular situation’ in a site specific case study (Cohen et al 2011, p.382). There are specific areas in the research that were exploratory so ‘open questions’ were used to help organise specific responses into themes. Quantitative questions were used where biographical and educational information was sought. In addition quantitative questions helped reduce the appearance of a long questionnaire which may have discouraged respondents from completing the survey (Cohen et al 2011).

3.5.3 **Phase Two Method: Semi-Structured interviews**

(i) **Sampling Strategy for Interview**

The interview was used to follow up on the survey as a method of greater exploration into the perceptions of the respondents. Therefore, the interviewee’s were accessed through a question in the survey which asked if they would like to participate in an interview (see Appendix E). The sample group was made up of thirty regular teachers working in the post-primary school. Fourteen participants demonstrated in the survey that they would be interested in participating in the interview. Random sampling was used; fourteen names were placed in an envelope and six interviewees were picked from the overall population under the supervision of an impartial colleague (Cohen et al 2011).

(ii) **Pilot Interview**

On the 25th of April a pilot interview was utilised to examine the structure of the interview and to allow for any issues that could arise. Merriam (2009) highlights that pilot interviews are crucial and allows the interviewer to refine questions and technique. The pilot interview allowed for techniques such as paraphrasing; the use of specific words; and follow-up questions to be developed and reflected on. It also provided an opportunity to test the
equipment and the location for the interviews which was an office located at the rear of the research school.

(iii) **Interview Design and Administration**

The six semi-structured interviews were approximately one hour long and provided rich and “thick descriptions” (Geertz 1973, p.6) in relation to the phenomenon. Kvale (1996, cited in Cohen et al 2011, p.409) refers to an interview as an “interchange of views” with a centrality “of human interaction for knowledge production”. The strength of using a semi-structured interview with an interview schedule is that the outline increases a systematic direction for the respondents, yet the interview remains mainly conversational (Cohen et al 2011; Thomas 2009). Lam and Hui’s (2010, pp.233-234) interview questions were adapted to create the interview schedule (Appendix H). The weakness of a semi-structured interview is that important salient topics may be missed or omitted due to the interview structure (Cohen et al 2011). This was addressed by the inclusion of a sufficient number of open-ended questions allowing each respondent to represent their own experiences; opinions; and feelings around their perceptions on a WSA to guidance counselling (Merriam 2009).

3.6 **Validity and Reliability in Mixed Methods Research**

3.6.1 **Validity**

The term validity pertains to certain requirements with which research has to conform. Though a positivist paradigm lends itself more readily to the requirements of validity, it can also be argued for an interpretivist approach where the researcher is aware of specific design stage threats (Cohen et al 2011, p.198). Internal validity refers to the internal logic and consistency of the research (Punch 2005). A broad definition of ‘internal validity’ is “the isomorphism of findings with reality” (Denzin and Lincoln 1994, p.114). This means how closely the findings represent and faithfully reflect what is being studied. This can be described as having internal consistency (Punch 2005).

Therefore, in a mixed method approach each individual approach must adhere to their individual validity requirements (Cohen et al 2011; Denzin and Lincoln 2011; Thomas 2009; Mertens 2005). The possible threats to validity were; researchers positionality within the case as a result of being the Guidance Counsellor in the school; bias for a positive result because the guidance counselling service would be under scrutiny; subjective interpretation of data; ethnicity and attitudes; best buddy syndrome (where the respondents skew answers to
please the researcher) and halo effect (knowledge of the interviewees) (Cohen et al. 2011, p.199). All of these were considered and were viewed as a possible threat to validity. One method for addressing the prominence of these threats was by ‘member checking’. Member checking is a method of checking internal validity. The interviewees were allowed to view their transcripts from the 23rd of May until the 30th of May to see if the account was accurate (Mertens 2005). The interviewees reported no changes or issues of accuracy. A second method was applying a reflexive approach (Etherington 2004) throughout this research to identify where invalidity may be lurking to minimise the areas of invalidity and reliability.

3.6.2 Reliability
Brock-Utne (1996) argues that reliability is relevant to both positivist and interpretivist paradigms. However, Wolcott (2005) contends that reliability is problematic in social research when being applied to the interpretivist paradigm. He argues for traditional reliability in a technical sense a “researcher has to manipulate conditions so that replicability can be assessed” (Wolcott 2005, p.159). Kleven (1995, cited in Brock-Utne 1996, p.614) refers to the relevance of applying the concept of reliability to an interpretivist paradigm “would a second observer with the same theoretical framework have seen and interpreted the observations the same way?” This is referred to “consistency over time or stability” (Punch 2005, p.95). Punch (2005) postulates that test-retest reliability would require the administration of the same instruments at two points in time. Therefore if another researcher was to administer the data collection instruments used in this research the results should deliver test-retest reliability.

3.6.3 Positionality of Researcher
In interpretivist research the person doing the research takes a central role in the interpretation. sometimes referred to as ‘situated knowledge’ or ‘positionality’ (Thomas 2009 p. 110). Positionality is defined as “the researcher has an undeniable position and this position affects the nature of the observations and the interpretations that they make” (Thomas 2009, p.110). The researcher of this study had a number of roles: a Guidance Counsellor and an Assistant Principal role; and a practitioner researcher role collecting data from regular teachers in the post-primary research school. The advantage of this position was that there was easy access and insider understanding. Possible disadvantages were a personal bias and subjectivity; generalisability of the findings and having a vested interest in the results (Punch 2009). I applied reflexivity to minimise contagion in the research.
3.6.4 Reflexivity

'Reflection' is a term extensively applied in education. In the area of practitioner based research ‘reflexivity’ has been adopted to address the complexities involved in the researcher’s process. Metler (2006, p.10) defines ‘reflection’ for teachers as researchers as: the “act of critically exploring what you are doing, why you decided to do it, and what the effects have been?”. Similarly, for quality research, the researcher should apply reflection in action as it has a critical function (Schon 1987, p.28). However, Schon (1987, p.28) argues that reflection gives rise to “on the spot experiment”. Consequently, it may yield intended results and also produce surprises that call for further reflection and experiment. Schon (1987) describes these philosophies as idealised and makes a distinction between reflection and “knowing in action”. He describes the distinction being that ‘knowing in action’ refers to a smooth performance of an ongoing task. The contention that Schon (1987) and Etherington (2004) make is that research may be understood to a greater extent by others if they have a greater understanding of the position of the researcher. Etherington (2004, p.28) applies ‘reflexivity’ as a fundamental model to inform the position of the researcher through self-questioning throughout their involvement in the research. She describes reflexivity as:

The skill that as counsellors we develop to notice our response to the world around us, other people and events and to use that knowledge to inform our actions, communications and understandings.

(Etherington 2004, p.19)

For a researcher to be reflexive they must also be aware of their personal, social and cultural contexts in which they live and work to fully understand the context required to interpret our world (Etherington 2004). Reflexivity in the form of note taking, research diary and interpersonal checking was applied to address issues related to my practitioner researcher position in this study.

3.6.5 Triangulation

Triangulation for a mixed method approach may be considered for:

The mutual validation of methods and research results so as to identify “threats to validity”, or it may be seen as a means to produce a more complete and “fuller” picture of the social phenomenon under study.

(Tasnakkori and Teddie 2003, p.462)

The use of a mixed method approach allowed for triangulation as a method of ensuring validity through the utilisation of two or more methods of data collection. There is a potential “complementarity” of qualitative and quantitative methods emphasised in the
literature (Tashakkori and Teddie 2003, p.462). The advantage of using surveys and semi-
structured interviews is that there is a reduction in the researcher’s bias that may distort the
findings (Cohen et al 2011). The “fitness of purpose” of two methods for the use of triangulation favour triangular techniques where a more “holistic” view of educational
outcomes are sought (Cohen et al 2011, p.197). An example of this would be Mortimore et
al’s (1988) study on school effectiveness. Perry (2009) also advocates a mixed methods
approach for his social research. He contends that the strengths of not being confined to only
one epistemology supports triangulation of results.

3.6.6 Data Analysis

The ‘Statistical Package for the Social Sciences’ (SPSS) was utilised for applying statistical
formulae and for analysing the ‘quantitative variables’ in the questionnaire (Cohen et al 2011,
p.604). SPSS analysed variables such as frequencies, age, gender, year qualified as a teacher,
parameters, cross referencing and other relevant data analysis required. Nomothetic coding
and theme mapping was applied for the data analysis from the qualitative data collection
elements of the questionnaire and the interview transcripts. Nomothetic coding can be
described as an approach characterised by “procedures and methods designed to discover
general laws” (Cohen et al (2011, p.6). Theme mapping is applying a theoretical lens to
analyse “comparative data” to develop themes (Thomas 2009, p.200). Interpretivist data was
analysed within a lens of patterns, themes, trends, commonalities, generalisations and
idiographic patterns (Miles and Huberman 1994).

3.7 Ethical Issues

The cost/benefit ratio is a “fundamental concept expressing the primary ethical dilemma in
social research” (Cohen et al 2011, p. 75). The cost to the participants in this research may
have been revelations about personal issues; embarrassment; loss of personal time or a
challenge to their professional role. As a qualified Guidance Counsellor I adhered to the duty
Ethics and to the NCGE (2008) Research Code of Ethics. There was a time inconvenience of
approximately twenty five minutes for the survey and approximately one hour for those who
participated in the interviews, this within a busy teaching schedule for the participants. The
justification for this was that the research provided an opportunity for the regular teachers’ to
express their perceptions and views in relation to the provision of a WSA to guidance
counselling. My aim was to be ethically conscious in my position as a researcher to give
40
regular teachers a voice. This is educational research and therefore it is sensitive. Ethics is defined as a “matter of principled sensitivity to the rights of others’ and while ‘truth is good; respect for human dignity is better” (Cavan 1977, p.810). Cohen et al (2011, see Appendix I) recommends a number of key questions to be adhered to when undertaking sensitive research.

I considered aspects of Cohen et al’s (2011) questions as follows:

- The participants were made aware of the purpose and benefit of the research.
- Each participant volunteered for the research and were advised of all of their rights.
- Anonymity was guaranteed.
- Informed permission was acquired from all participants.
- The interviewees were informed about an opt. out clause prior to participation.
- The interviews were transcribed and the interviewees received the opportunity to member check.
- I transcribed all interviews and analysed all data myself.
- A commitment to the secure location of the research data has been adhered to.

In addition to applying these questions as a guide there was a stringent adherence to codes of ethics of the IGC (2012a); NCGE (2008); and PSI (1995) to protect the integrity of the research.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the research methodology and methods utilised for this research study. The research design frame is a case study examining the perceptions of regular teachers of a WSA to guidance counselling in a post-primary school. A mixed method approach that hinged mainly on an interpretivist paradigm was used to extract the relevant data. The data collection involved a SurveyMonkey questionnaire with both qualitative and quantitative items and six interviews. Chapter 4 presents the data analysis and findings from the SurveyMonkey questionnaires and the regular teachers’ interviews.
Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings

4.0 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the main findings of Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the research. A number of overarching themes and sub themes emerged which illustrate the perceptions of the regular teachers of a whole school approach (WSA) to guidance counselling in a mid west post-primary school. This chapter’s structure is divided into Phase 1 and Phase 2 which aligns with the two methods of data collection utilised.

4.1 Phase One: Results from online SurveyMonkey

The first phase of gathering data for this case study was the utilisation of an online SurveyMonkey to explore the perspectives of the regular teachers on the topic (see Appendix E). The aim of Phase 1 was to explore the influences around the participation of regular teachers to a WSA to guidance counselling. The online SurveyMonkey was distributed via email to thirty regular teachers working in the post-primary school. There was a 100% response rate recorded for the survey; however, the response rate for each item varied (see Appendix J for the full results from the online SurveyMonkey). This section presents the findings of the SurveyMonkey which included both quantitative and qualitative data. SPSS was utilised for analysing the quantitative data. The qualitative data from the SurveyMonkey was analysed by nomothetic coding and theme mapping.

4.1.1 Section 1: Demographic Information

The purpose of the preliminary part of the survey was to elicit socio-demographic information from the regular teachers such as: gender; years working in education; programmes taught; and whether they participated in extra-curricular activities (ECA). The closing items in this section were open questions examining the perceptions of what education means to the regular teachers and the factors that affect the success of students. The respondents consisted of a total of 29 participants, 17 male regular teachers and 12 female regular teachers. However, one individual skipped the gender question and only answered 3 questions in the entire survey. The majority, 55% have worked in education for 11 years and over. Furthermore, quite a low percentage, 3.4% of regular teachers had over 30 years experience. Interestingly, the years worked in education ranged between 20.7% with 1-5 years experience and 10.3% with over 26 years experience, see Chart 4.1.
A total of 58.6% of the 29 regular teachers who responded provided extracurricular activities to students within the school. These extracurricular activities were in three main areas: an overall majority, 70.6% were in relation to sport (for example, athletics, field games, rowing); 23.5% in competitions (for example, quiz teams, science, mini-company) and 23.5% in societies (for example, year book, musical, language exchanges) (see Appendix J, Q.4). No fewer than 10.3% of regular teachers were involved in three or more activities. One respondent in the survey suggested that extracurricular activities were a crucial contributing factor to the success of a student in school. In total 96.7% of the regular teachers taught a Leaving Certificate Programme and 93.3% delivered a Junior Certificate Programme. Interestingly, programmes which are designed for students who require additional educational support such as the JCSP (26.7%) and the LCA (16.7%) had substantially less of the regular teachers working in the area, see Table 4.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Junior Certificate (JC)</td>
<td>93.3%</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaving Certificate (LC)</td>
<td>96.7%</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior Certificate Schools Programme (JSCP)</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA)</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP)</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE)</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Year</td>
<td>73.3%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Leaving Certificate (PLC)</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answered questions</td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1 – Programmes that each teacher delivers in the school

The post-primary school programmes can be grouped into three main headings: (i) The Junior Certificate programme consisting of the JC, JCSP and CSPE; (ii) The Leaving Certificate
programme which consists of the LC, LCVP and LCA; and (iii) Post Leaving Certificate programmes are also provided. The quality of teaching was referred to as: "organisation of the teacher"; "communication style of teacher"; "classroom environment"; and "relationship with the teacher". Conversely, the professionalism of the teacher and their professional values were presented as a crucial factor in the quality of education delivered.

The ‘holistic’ educational experience of students was another theme that emerged in the findings (see Appendix J, Q.5). The majority, 70% of the regular teachers mentioned the importance of catering for the academic, personal, social and emotional development of the student. Additionally, several regular teachers highlighted awareness around their role in supporting a student reaching their "potential". Words such as "mould”, “nourishing” and “to have a positive influence” provided an insight into how the regular teachers felt about supporting the holistic development of their students. One response: “being a facilitator not dictator” highlighted the model of education that this respondent used to support the development of a student. Similarly, when an academic element was reported such as “academic growth” in a subject area, it often had a caveat such as “preparing them for life”, or to succeed “professionally and personally”. Furthermore, a few of the regular teachers described being “proud” and having a “sense of achievement” from seeing their students develop a “love of learning” and an agency around their learning. The success of a student can be understood through two distinct themes, ‘external influences’ and ‘school issues’ (see Appendix J, Q.6). External influences such as: socio-economic background; “unemployment”; “family”; “resources”; and peers. School issues were suggested to be: peers; academic; aptitude (“literacy” skills); “school environment”; “bullying”; and “their own expectations”. Interestingly, one of the main school factors proposed was the “quality of teaching” and the teaching environment.

4.1.2 Section 2: Pastoral Care

In the delivery of pastoral care a theme that emerged was the autonomous role of regular teachers in relation to a ‘duty of care’. The respondents’ understanding of the term pastoral care primarily was regarded as “support”, “student welfare” and “care” (see Appendix J). The autonomous role of regular teachers was referred to in the findings as “loco parentis”. One respondent referred to the role as “being a surrogate parent for a few hours.” Furthermore, they suggested focusing more on students’ “emotional/social state rather than academic” (see Appendix J, Q.7).
Chart 4.2 illustrates the responses of the regular teachers to the provision of pastoral care support to students. A large majority, 84.6% of the 26 regular teachers, who answered this question, selected the Guidance Counsellor. Interestingly, 80.8% of the regular teachers selected ‘a teacher that you feel the student responds well to’. The next highest selected were the ‘teacher’ (69.2%); ‘class tutor’ (65.4%); and ‘year head’ (65.4%) respectively.

The findings suggest that the regular teachers have a substantial role in the delivery of pastoral care. However, they also state that the Guidance Counsellor plays an integral role in its provision. The other pastoral care supports in the school reported were ‘School Completion Officer’ (50%) and ‘Home School Liaison’ (61.5%). Furthermore, the regular teachers who selected the Deputy Principal (46.2%) also selected the Principal (46.2%). The regular teachers were offered the opportunity to specify others and 75% suggested that it was a ‘whole school responsibility’ (see Appendix J). The next item (Q.9) explored the experience of the regular teachers in delivering pastoral care. No fewer than 44.4% (12) of the regular teachers had held a position on a pastoral care team. A total of 9 out of these 12
regular teachers listed the pastoral care teams as follows: Year Head (3); Personal Safety Board (4); and Student Support Team (2).

Chart 4.3 (Q.10) shows that the majority of these regular teachers, 41.7% (a response rate of 5) offered pastoral support to 6th Year students. When correlating the responses to questions 9 and 10 the findings suggest that while teachers are willing to assume the ‘duty of care’ role within their teaching role, only 44.4% had direct experience of voluntary pastoral care programmes within the school.

"Duty of care" was another theme that emerged in the survey findings, emphasising regular teacher’s felt a ‘personal responsibility’ for providing a duty of care to students (see Appendix J, Q.11). This ‘personal responsibility’ was described as: “noticing any change in behaviour”; “should always be available to provide support”; “aware of the particular needs”; “interests” and “aspirations of each individual student”; and the “teacher is the first person students relate to and there should be a total availability of teachers”. Interestingly, the word ‘should’ was used in a directive context in 9 responses, for example “every day should see issues”. This suggests that these regular teachers see pastoral care as a professional responsibility within the school environment.
A number of the responses in the survey indicate that there was an issue surrounding regular teachers’ boundaries when providing pastoral care. No fewer than 5 of the regular teachers were very clear on their role and boundaries “providing advice and guidance to young people on issues relating to their education” (see Appendix J, Q.11). These respondents were willing to offer a duty of care but were aware that support was available by referring a student to the Guidance Counsellor or an appropriate pastoral care team member. In summary, a large number of regular teachers reported a high level of autonomy in how they delivered pastoral care support.

4.1.3 Section 3: Whole School Guidance Counselling Provision

The survey findings suggest that the role of the Guidance Counsellor could be separated into distinct elements: educational/vocational guidance and personal guidance. The regular teachers referred to the educational/vocational guidance element as: guiding students with CAO forms; career choices; information on further education/training; and personal development related to helping students to become aware of their ‘talents and abilities’. Personal guidance was described as working with students dealing with ‘issues from home/school’; “with personal and sensitive issues”; “major emergencies” and “ongoing issues” (see Appendix J, Q.12). The regular teachers were asked their understanding of the term guidance. The findings suggest that the regular teachers understood guidance as support to the decision making of students and offering advice around “career choices” (see Appendix J, Q.13). Similarly, the respondents viewed the role of the Guidance Counsellor as primarily guiding students on their career choices. It is worth noting that no fewer than 4 of the regular teachers referred to the personal development aspect of guidance. The findings reveal that the regular teachers understood the term ‘counselling’ as the provision of “support” through “listening” in a secure safe environment for students dealing with “personal difficulties”. Furthermore, 4 regular teachers referred to the role of counselling as providing personal development around the management of feelings and helping students to “reflect” and “adapt” to life’s changing experiences. Interestingly, one respondent highlighted that “counselling is a service provided by someone who is qualified to counsel” (see Appendix J, Q.14). When the regular teachers described the term counselling they referred mainly to a support for a personal issue such as: bereavement; separation of parents; bullying; and general support. However, when the regular teachers were asked about the
reasons a student would require counselling support the overwhelming response was in a time of “personal crisis”. They used terms like: “feel unable to cope”; “serious incident at home or school; “personal trauma”; and “suicidal, major, issues”. Surprisingly, 2 of the regular teachers suggested that students ought not to need to seek out counselling, that counselling should be available “at all times” or “when-ever they require it or teachers think that a student requires it” (see Appendix J, Q.15). The regular teachers were also asked to choose a response in relation to their perceptions of Section 9(C) of the Education Act (1998). Chart 4.4 shows that 56% strongly agreed with Section 9(C), namely that the delivery of guidance counselling was a whole school responsibility. No fewer than 12% answered ‘tend to disagree’ and none of the respondents ‘strongly disagreed’. When the regular teachers were asked what role the DES should play in supporting teachers in the provision of a WSA to guidance counselling, 15 responded that they should provide “in-service” training to help with the “up skilling of teachers” (see Appendix J, Q.17). Additionally, one respondent described the training being sought as the “provision of qualified teachers/ counsellor to deal with student issues; provide time/opportunity in school timetable. Include in the syllabi” (see Appendix J, Q.18). The area of resources (time and funding) was a secondary aspect in the responses. The regular teachers suggested that time should be provided within the school timetable, which is inexplicably linked to funding. One respondent argued that the DES should be “increasing hours instead of cutting them”, reflecting the changes to the guidance provision in Budget 2012. The findings of Phase 1 illuminated the perceptions of the regular teachers of a WSA to guidance counselling through the analysis of the data gathered from the online survey. The next section presents the findings from Phase 2, which
involved six semi-structured interviews with regular teachers who responded to the survey in Phase 1.

4.2 Phase Two: Results from Semi-Structured Interviews

Phase 2 of the data collection and analysis involved six individual semi-structured interviews. The interview data was analysed by using nomothetic coding and theme mapping. The aim of this section is to provide a deeper perspective of the phenomenon under investigation through the narratives of one female and five male regular teachers (for extracts from interview transcripts see Appendix K). Pseudonyms are used to protect the identity of the six regular teachers. Table 4.2 provides demographic information of the interviewee’s.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Role Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anthony</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>Is an Assistant Dean and is a member on two other pastoral care teams, the SST and the PSB.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill</td>
<td>13 years</td>
<td>Is member of the SST and the PSB.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carol</td>
<td>8 years</td>
<td>Is an Assistant Dean and member of the PSB.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derek</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>Is an Assistant Dean and a member of the PSB.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ewan</td>
<td>20 years</td>
<td>Is an Assistant Dean and a member of the PSB.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank</td>
<td>17 years</td>
<td>Is an Assistant Dean and has an active pastoral care role in the school.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2: Demographic Information of Interviewees

Four overarching themes emerged in the qualitative findings which also include a number of subthemes. The four are:

1. Delivery of a holistic education experience
2. The pastoral care role of regular teachers in the post-primary school
3. Whole school approach (WSA) to guidance counselling
4. Implications of budget 2012 on guidance counselling provision

4.2.1 Delivery of a Holistic Education Experience

Holistic education was described by an overwhelming majority of the six regular teachers as supporting every aspect of education for the individual student such as: the student’s interactions in school with teachers, peers, appropriate classroom environment, extracurricular activities, and having an awareness of the “nature of human relationships” (Frank). Frank spoke in-depth about the importance of ‘human interactions’ in education and that education is not about teaching “little machines to get A’s and B’s” (Frank).
endorsed this view by arguing that appropriate ‘holistic’ education contributed to “the mental well being of the individual” and assists them in developing “the behavioural skills” required for “coping with stress”. The interviewee’s were passionate (see extracts from research diary Appendix L. Interview 1: Anthony) when describing the attributes of providing a balance between the academic and pastoral sides of education. In summary, the regular teachers described the delivery of an appropriate pastoral care approach as an aspect of their professional role in relation to holistic education.

4.2.2 The Pastoral Care Role of Regular Teachers in the Post-Primary School

The pastoral care role of regular teachers and how it is viewed within educational discourse was illuminated in the data. Interestingly, the regular teachers described their professional role as fulfilling a ‘traditional’ class based role hand in hand with a more non-traditional ‘pastoral care role’. The majority of the regular teachers argued that the quality of education delivered was directly linked to the quality of the personal, social and emotional support provided through the teacher/student relationship. For example Bill stated:

They may look up to you; they may love your subject. They may even like your personality you know. And you have to build up a relationship with them which is very important not only academically but also for them. (Bill)

The data supports the view that the altruistic ‘nature’ of the regular teacher is directly linked to the following: life experiences and relationships from their school life; the personality of the regular teachers; and a ‘duty of care’ as an intrinsic responsibility. The regular teachers in general described having a positive experience while in school and having a strong bond with their teachers. One teacher, Carol stated:

I would have had very good relationships with my teachers in secondary school. I would have had a very good school experience in secondary and primary. I thought let this continue into another stage. It was more I had a good experience. (Carol)

Carol described having a strong attachment to her school years and suggested that this was an influence in her selecting education as a career. Another interviewee, Bill disclosed that his home life was difficult while he was a student in secondary school. Bill’s mother had died and school provided a “safety zone” for him (see Appendix K). Interestingly 50% of the interviewee’s described how their life experiences contributed to their decision to pursue a career in education. The interviewee’s narratives suggested that their personalities and their
Bill described the advantages of providing an ECA as follows:

......... extracurricular activity is a handy way of meeting people and I think that it is time that we need to say that this is part of the teaching profession.  

(Bill)

Bill and Anthony highlighted that a small percentage of teachers did not offer an altruistic role as they mainly applied an authoritarian style of classroom management. Carol spoke about the challenge of embodying both an altruistic pastoral care role and a disciplinarian role. Bill supported this assertion by describing a personal conflict that a colleague was experiencing whereby she was presenting herself ‘authoritarian’, not allowing the nature of the relationships to develop: “her guard was up the whole time” which he suggested prevented her from offering pastoral support.

The welfare of the students was a common thread in the regular teacher’s narratives. The findings are that the regular teachers attach a deep respect in providing a ‘loco parentis’ role. They spoke fervently about offering this ‘primary care giving role’ to each individual student. Bill described this role as:

Well I guess the role of the teacher for caring for the students is you are in a sense ‘loco parentis’ you are their mother, their father, their brother and their sister. Am......you have to bring good news and bad news to them and you have to keep an eye on them.  

(Bill)

Frank referred to the students ‘like his babies’. A number of the regular teachers used family relationship metaphors to describe the teacher/student relationship and the delivery of a duty of care. However, Anthony described a challenge in providing this level of duty of care:

It is difficult finding the time but you have to be very careful about brushing that student aside................. it is important to give them the time as well.  

(Anthony)

Anthony and Frank used the term “brushing” away students a number of times in their narratives referring to their concerns about students not receiving an appropriate duty of care. Bill suggested that a professional responsibility was to ensure that a student is ‘scooped’ up and supported instead of being ‘brushed away’. It is also noteworthy that a number of the interviewee’s referred to their concern about “kids getting lost in a big school” (Bill).

Two options were presented in the narratives for preventing students ‘getting lost in the system’. The first option was described as ‘observing’ students, being mindful how they are presenting in class and around the school. The second was ‘checking in’ with students at
regular intervals. Frank described observing as: "Usually..... it just is their body language I suppose really, in classes you see them" (Frank). Anthony described 'checking in' as being vigilant around the school just saying 'hello' or a "quiet word inside the ear...... Just a gentle are you okay" (Anthony). Additionally, Ewan referred to checking in as follows:

The staff here is very dynamic. I have worked in around four or five schools but I would see things between the staffroom and the classroom. Every staff member here will have 4 conversations. But friendly conversations such as how are you going. I would see that as a pastoral kind of care as well. I would see it happening with nearly every teacher.

(Ewan)

There was a consensus amongst the regular teachers about the importance of 'checking in'. Bill suggested that it is often the students “that makes the most noise gets most attention” so quiet kids often “get lost in a big school” (see Appendix K). Therefore, Bill argued that certain pastoral care practices for looking after the small issues can often prevent issues becoming bigger.

Another sub-theme that emerged was how regular teachers viewed their boundaries around pastoral care work. Carol described her role in a clearly defined manner. She would deliver on the ‘observing’ and ‘checking in’ work which may involve having a ‘chat after classes’. However she was clear that “if it wasn’t to do with school I would talk to the Dean. If it was a home issue I would deal with you, the guidance department” (Carol). Derek and Ewan concurred, stating they would engage with pastoral supports early. In contrast, Anthony, Bill and Frank described working with students at a deeper level. Interestingly, they recounted situations where they have successfully supported a student and felt comfortable offering such support. Equally, Frank described a reluctance to refer on a student for a pastoral support issue and only referred when he had determined that it was at a high level of risk. He stated that sometimes a student wants to talk but does not wish to go through “formal channels” (see Appendix K). The findings suggest that regular teachers themselves decide on the levels of engagement in the pastoral care work that they offer students.

Two sub-themes in relation to the regular teachers’ initial education training emerged in the findings, the ‘educational/course modular delivery’ and the ‘practical teaching experience’. The regular teachers reported that the education and subject specific modular elements of their initial teacher education (ITE) were of a good standard. However, the consensus was that there was a ‘deficit’ in the quality of the personal, social and emotional (PSE) fundamentals. The length of time that had elapsed since each interviewee’s teacher training
ranged from 5 to 20 years. Moreover, they described how their teaching experience was worthwhile but for different reasons. For Derek, the benefit of the teaching experience was in gaining a real “insight into what the job was like instead of showing the stuff in lectures or tutorials” (Derek). Accordingly, the consensus was that the interviewee’s gained from the practical experience of being out teaching in the system. However, the quality of the experience varied. Ewan and Frank experienced teacher training over twenty years ago and both described the quality of the supervision and support as poor. Ewan referred to the experience as “when you walked in the person gave you the timetable and textbook and that was it. In ten weeks he shook your hand and took that textbook back” (Ewan).

In contrast the remaining regular teachers described receiving a greater level of supervision from the relevant training college but no structured mentoring or support in the school itself. The findings suggest that the greatest learning was from experiences such as: support from a colleague; the pastoral ethos of the schools; social issues that students presented with; learning from mistakes; and interactions with students. Carol explained that on her teaching experience a student died accidentally. She described feelings of uncertainty and fear around how to cope in the role of a teacher:

It happened late on Sunday evening and as it happened as a young teacher and coming in hearing .............. I didn’t know how to react. I didn’t know how to react with my colleagues in the staffroom and lastly I didn’t know how to react with the students that were going to be in front of me that day. (Carol)

An overwhelming number of the regular teachers criticised the quality of the pastoral care continual professional development (CPD) training received since qualifying. They suggested that the training dealt mainly with self harm and suicide prevention; whereas they would prefer training around the fundamentals of how to support and deliver pastoral care in small group seminars. The interviewee’s referred to their model of learning and experience as: learning from on the ground experiences; learning from colleagues or informal mentoring; and as Derek described it “what you bring into it yourself already”. Nevertheless, a majority spoke positively about future formal CPD training if it was delivered appropriately.

4.2.3 Whole School Approach (WSA) to Guidance Counselling

The area of career guidance support and the delivery of a WSA to guidance counselling was a major theme in all of the interviews. Anthony described it as follows:

So in terms of WSA to guidance counselling I suppose definitely having all of the teachers. Again going back to the whole pastoral care thing having all teachers involved on a daily basis not just dealing with issues but guiding students putting them in the right direction in terms of options for
subjects in terms of what aspects of life in terms of sporting extracurricular it is not just again education.

(Anthony)

Accordingly, there was a consensus that it was up to each individual teacher to take on a basic guidance counselling role on an everyday basis. The areas that emerged in relation to WSA to guidance counselling are: general guidance counselling support; confidentiality and communication; and policy and practice for the delivery in a post-primary school.

The perceived role of the Guidance Counsellor in the findings relate mainly to the provision of career advice and offering support to students dealing with personal issues. Frank stated:

It is very effective, we won't go down any avenues but it is very effective. Yeah I would have the height of respect for the Guidance Counsellors. It is a job that I couldn't do................. There is a genuine sense that they are minded. Am..........and you feel if there was a child with a problem that you could go to the Guidance Counsellor and they would mind it.

(Frank)

The school guidance service was reported by the majority of the interviewees as an area that was working well. Interestingly, a number of roles emerged in the data such as: providing advice and support for teaching staff; and implementing and delivering personal, social and emotional (PSE) training to regular teachers. Additionally, one role that was suggested for the Guidance Counsellor was to develop, implement and manage the WSA approach to guidance counselling. Anthony supported this view, suggesting that the Guidance Counsellor was the “most professional” member of staff for this area.

In relation to the guidance counselling service, issues such as confidentiality and communication emerged. The interviewees suggested that if regular teachers were given a ‘bit more information’ in relation to the types of issues a student was dealing with, they would be in a better place to offer appropriate support. Anthony suggested that 'pre warned was pre armed'. However, they acknowledged that ethically, confidentiality was a fundamental element of the work of the Guidance Counsellor. Frank argued that if you were given sufficient information then you would be prepared:

But of course you have confidentiality issues. Am................. It really is a need to know basis. Am..........it is very hard, very tough one to call. It depends on the individual teachers and what they would do with that information................. English that you avoid certain poems you avoid certain issues when there are students in there with issues. When you find yourself in the middle of it you go Jesus Christ. And you steer away from it yeah.

(Frank)

Furthermore, the confidentiality element of the pastoral care teams emerged such as: the Student Support Team (SST); Personal Safety Board (PSB); and the Assistant Dean
structures. However, no concern was expressed by Carol and Derek around the issue of confidentiality within the provision of pastoral care. Carol stated:

I would say in the school here that it is very good like that. I don’t really know too much what goes on in the SST. I obviously know that it deals with scenarios. I would say that it is confidential so you don’t really know what is going on.

(Carol)

The majority of the regular teachers felt excluded from the pastoral care process because of the level of confidentiality involved. Ewan referred to the Guidance Counsellor as a “ghost” in the delivery of a pastoral care role:

And it is discreet. And I think that what makes it work. It is so discreet that I don’t recognise it half the time. I think that is very good. People say does it really exist. That is a great question. I hope that it does. I have seen serious cases. Tough cases. and in like bullet. People like you are like a ghost. They only come out at certain times.

(Frank)

In summary, the topic of confidentiality within the role of the Guidance Counsellor and pastoral care teams emerged as an issue for the majority of the interviewees. The main pastoral care policies described as working well in the narratives were the pastoral care supports and structures in the post-primary school. Ewan highlighted that he was unaware of an actual written school policy for the delivery of pastoral care “Now the school has a policy on pastoral care. I have to say that I have no idea” (see Appendix K).

The interviewees referred to the pastoral care structures as an ascending level of support for students. The pastoral care structures were firstly offered by the regular teacher: Assistant Dean; Dean; Guidance Counsellors; PSB; SST; and then Deputy Principal and Principal. The majority of the regular teachers proposed that all staff should participate in a WSA and integrate PSE into curriculum. The regular teachers alluded to the fact that there are specific courses which already have some of these. The science course for example has an STS (science-technology society) element that is part of the Junior Certificate curriculum (see Appendix K).

Ewan shared the view that regular teachers should be involved and integrate PSE where possible. However, he suggested that WSA to guidance counselling was under the full remit and responsibility of the school Guidance Counsellor. He explained it as follows:

What does he do? Somebody call you Guidance Counsellor. Some call you career guidance. They are two very different terms. The question that I have is which ...................... So a whole school means that whole school. That everyone knows what you do everyone knows what they have to do in relation to you. So we just don’t say that is a guidance issue.

(Ewan)
Therefore, the findings suggest that regular teachers are willing to participate in a fully integrated WSA to guidance counselling where the Guidance Counsellor is the coordinator of the overall delivery process.

4.2.4 Implications of Budget 2012 on Guidance Counselling Provision

The changes made to the provision of guidance counselling in Budget 2012 were viewed as a prominent issue in relation to a WSA to guidance counselling by the interviewees. Bill and Anthony argued that the current guidance counselling provision was already inappropriate for a large post-primary school. Accordingly, Anthony perceived that the Guidance Counsellors in the school were already pressurised and as a result regular teachers should take on a greater pastoral care role. The interviewees used descriptive emotive language when describing how the changes to the service post Budget 2012 would affect them (see Appendix L, Interview 5). Bill expressed feelings of being “agitated and disgruntled”; Derek spoke about possibly being under “more pressure”; Frank described feeling “terrified” about being put into a position that he would say the wrong thing referring to the changes as a “disaster”. Bill, Ewan and Frank were visibly animated about the changes especially in relation to the students missing out on appropriate guidance counselling support. An overall majority of the regular teachers proposed that if a student was in need of support from the Guidance Counsellor, that the practitioner from September onwards will be in classroom, subject teaching. Therefore, the suggestion is that the students will revert to regular teachers for support or not seek any support at all. In particular the regular teachers highlighted four main concerns about the changes:

1. Firstly, Derek argued that if a teacher is under pressure to get their course completed or offer extra pastoral care duties, “exam classes will come first”. Similarly, Carol, Derek and Bill argued that time is currently an issue for regular teachers offering support. Furthermore, Carol stated that because of time issues she currently struggles to deliver her pastoral care role.

2. Ewan argued that the area of guidance counselling and pastoral care support is in danger of losing its profile within the school because the Guidance Counsellor will not have time to advocate for this area. Ewan also stated that it will “create an atmosphere of it is not really important. If we could afford to cut you then it certainly wasn’t important so”.

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Concern was raised about the level of involvement by regular teachers in pastoral care support. Anthony, Bill and Frank articulated feelings of ‘stress’ and annoyance with the prospect of their role changing as a result of Budget 2012. Frank’s narrative highlighted the central argument of the interviewees as follows: that Guidance Counsellors are specifically trained and chose to do this work and some regular teachers prefer to offer a low level of pastoral care. He argued that students now need more support than ever as a result of what he calls a growing "dysfunctional society" due to family breakdowns and financial issues. Therefore, the concern raised is that the regular teacher’s role will expand into providing a greater level of pastoral care as a result of the impending changes to the provision of guidance counselling in the school.

Carol argued:

They are still going to go to the Guidance Counsellor. But when........ Where are they going to go? Why? They are obviously going to go back to their teacher, who is not going to have the time.

(4) Finally, there was a belief amongst the regular teachers that the student will not seek help as a result of the impending changes. Bill spoke about two types of students. The gregarious student who will present and seek support; and the quiet student who never looks for attention but could be dealing with an issue alone. Additionally, Anthony put forward the following argument:

Situation by a student who has been very open with the guidance team now becomes a closed book. You are dealing with a bomb ready to go off and if they are not willing to open up to you then you’re working conditions can be where they could go through extremes of moods in class ............... So I would find my role getting a lot more stressful ........ Am and then again not having that support from the guidance team.

(Anthony)

This highlights the genuine feelings of stress expressed by Anthony around the changes to the provision of guidance counselling in Budget 2012, and further illustrates the perceived effect that the changes in Budget 2012 will have on the role of regular teachers in the school.

Phase 2 provided a more in-depth view of the perceptions of six regular teachers of a WSA to guidance counselling in the researched school. The interviews revealed the individual teachers’ level of involvement and commitment to pastoral care support. Moreover, it highlights the nature of their concerns with regard to the imminent changes in the coming academic year due to the propositions of Budget 2012.
4.3 Conclusion

This chapter presented an analysis of the findings from the two phases of data collection, the online survey and the six semi-structured interviews. The data was presented under relevant themes and sub themes. The analysis presents an in-depth account of the data and illuminates a number of issues central to the research topic. In Chapter 5 the primary data analysis and findings are discussed in relation to previous research.
Chapter 5: Discussion

5.0 Introduction
The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the overarching themes that emerged in the research findings. The primary research question was ‘what are the perceptions of regular teachers of a whole school approach (WSA) to guidance counselling in a mid west post-primary school?’

Primarily, the findings elucidate a group of regular teachers’ views and opinions on the central issues that influence their perceptions and involvement in a WSA to guidance counselling. The four overarching themes that emerged in the study were:

1. Delivery of a holistic education experience
2. The pastoral care role of regular teachers in the post-primary school
3. Whole school approach (WSA) to guidance counselling
4. Implications of Budget 2012 guidance counselling provision

5.1 Delivery of a Holistic Education Experience
The delivery of a quality education that caters for all of the needs of the individual student is an aspiration across different education jurisdictions. There are a number of dynamic social and economic developments currently influencing educational discourse. The primary concern is for the provision of a system of education and a policy environment which can serve the “advancement of knowledge, national development and the public good” (HEA and NCCA 2011, p.21). The findings of this study support the view that education is currently under pressure to produce graduates for the ‘knowledge society’. However, the participants in the research study affirm the importance of providing a quality ‘holistic’ education.

5.1.1 Defining Holistic Education
The literature supports the supposition that a quality education is delivered in an environment that emphasises the intrinsic value of allowing an individual student to develop intellectually, socially and personally (Smyth and McCoy 2011; Mannix McNamara et al 2008; Best et al 1995; Seed 1992). Similarly, ‘holistic education’ emerges as a crucial factor in the success of a student in school. Seed (1992, p.42) defines holistic education as “engaging with the whole person of each child”. A fundamental responsibility for teachers is to acknowledge and respect the individuality of each student and promote their ‘holistic development’ (The Teaching Council 2011, p.7).
The findings of this study support Seed’s definition and two of Miller’s (2000) ‘levels of wholeness’, ‘The Whole Person’ and the ‘Wholeness in Community’. The regular teachers categorised the delivery of a holistic education experience as central to the delivery of a quality education. One of the research participants, Bill, supported this assertion by suggesting that it contributed to the “mental well being of students”. Lam and Hui (2010) argue that schools that offer a holistic education structure can help to support the mental health of students. Additionally, the findings of this study affirmed that students can ‘flourish’ and develop a love of learning which can help them to succeed ‘professionally and personally’.

5.1.2 Levels of Wholeness Perspective

The literature highlights that a supportive school community can contribute to a positive holistic education experience for the individual (OECD 2012; NCCA 2004). Bill in his narrative spoke about the importance of ‘human relationships’ in education. Similarly, developing human relationships in a school community is a very important objective for the delivery of a quality education (Miller 2000). The findings suggest that when you create a suitable environment students can become more aware of their “talents and abilities” and how to “utilise” and optimise them to reach their full potential (see Appendix J). One regular teacher, Frank, refers to this as follows:

Nurturing the whole child. Not to turn them into little grade machines. Realising that there is a personality behind the face and behind the marks. Helping them to become the best that they can be. The happiest and the best. And the two of those usually go hand in hand.

(Frank)

The NGF (2007) applies a similar notion in their definition of the term guidance, to ‘facilitate’ people to reach their ‘full potential’. Additionally, it has been identified that when there is a strong community relationship of trust fostered in school, students are able to “grow stronger through the process” (NEWB 2008, p.16). Therefore, the findings of this study support the view that students’ holistic education experience is a central focus for the regular teachers in the researched post-primary school.

The six elements of the ‘whole person’ proposed by Miller (2000) are: physical, emotional, intellectual, social, aesthetic and spiritual. In this study, the regular teachers referred to how they endeavoured to create an educational balance to incorporate the whole person of the student. The findings suggest that the holistic educational experience of the student is
influenced by the environment and through extracurricular activities (ECA). In the research school the majority of regular teachers provided ECA such as: sport, and societies and competitions which catered for the six elements of the whole person. ECA are recommended as an integral part of the provision of a balanced education and schools are expected to offer an array of ECA in conjunction with a formal curriculum (Shulruf et al 2008). Likewise, the findings were that the majority of regular teachers viewed the provision of ECA as an essential part of both school life and the holistic education experience for the individual student. Anthony and Bill (see Appendix K) articulated that ECA was essential for building relationships with the students and it can develop links within the whole school community. This suggests that the teachers who do not provide any ECA may have to make a greater effort in developing relationships within their subject areas alone. Miller (2000) argued that educators should not just see students as brains to be 'programmed', but rather as a ‘whole’ being. Additionally, Frank supported this assertion and referred to the development of the student as a whole person and that education was not about teaching “little machines” to achieve A’s and B’s in their Leaving Certificate.

5.2 The Pastoral Care Role of the Regular Teachers in the Post-Primary School

In general, the area of pastoral care emerged as one of the main themes in the study. The findings suggest that the delivery of a quality holistic education directly influences the standard of pastoral care provided in the post-primary school. One response by a regular teacher in the survey described delivering quality pastoral care as “a whole life approach, taking care of all aspects of their lives, not just academic” (see Appendix J). Therefore, to discuss the meaning of pastoral care it is important to revisit the UK’s DES (1989) definition presented in Chapter 2:

Pastoral care is concerned with promoting pupils’ personal and socio development and fostering positive attitudes; through the quality of teaching and learning; through the nature of relationships amongst pupils, teachers and adults other than teachers; through arrangements for monitoring pupils’ overall progress, academic, personal and social; through specific pastoral structures and support systems; through extra-curricular activities and the school ethos. Pastoral care, accordingly, should help a school achieve success.

(UK DES, 1989, p.3)

Although Carroll (2010) argues that a definition remains elusive, the findings of this study support the UK DES (1989) definition which outlines the diversity and pervasiveness of pastoral care in the post-primary school (Mannix McNamara et al 2008; Best et al 1995). Furthermore, a number of key areas around the delivery of pastoral care that emerged in the
data are referred to in the UK DES (1989) definition, such as the delivery of a quality education as “promoting pupils’ personal and socio development and fostering positive attitudes; through the quality of teaching and learning” (p.3). The regular teachers imply that their role as educators is more in line with ‘facilitating’ and ‘promoting’, rather than authoritarian or ‘dictatorial’. In Latin ‘pastor’ means ‘shepherd’ and ‘care’ refers to something we ‘do’ (Best et al 1995). The ‘do’ refers to a teacher providing personal contact, and developing and supporting an appropriate relationship for students (Lodge and Watkins 1997). The ‘caring’, provided as part of the regular teachers’ role was clearly evident in the primary findings. Moreover, the findings were that an overall majority, 80% of the regular teachers acknowledged the ‘do’ as part of their professional and ‘loco parentis’ role.

5.2.1 Pastoral Care as Part of the Regular Teachers Professional Role
Pastoral care is now recognised as a professional value in the ‘Teaching Council Act 2001’ and the subsequent ‘Code of Professional Values’ in 2011. The role of a teacher is to “be positive, caring, fair, and committed to the best interests of the pupils/students entrusted to their care” (Teaching Council 2011, p.7). The findings of this study support the Teaching Council’s assertion that the provision of appropriate pastoral care is part of a teacher’s professional role. However, the findings provide a more in-depth exploration into the perceptions of regular teachers’ professional role.

The professional role of teaching has traditionally been centred in a ‘traditional approach’ methodology (Sexton 2007). Conversely, the shift in educational discourse resulting from Budget 2012 has redirected the focus onto the more non traditional professional roles of regular teachers. In the study the regular teachers referred to two strands of teacher professionalism, a ‘traditional’ class based role and a ‘non-traditional’ pastoral care role. Two participants, Ewan and Derek described the multi-modal academic aspect of their traditional class based role, while three other participants, Anthony, Bill and Frank spoke about the non-traditional pastoral care role of ‘observing’ and ‘checking in’ with students. Sexton (2007) presents three attributes of a teacher’s ‘practitioner’ professionalism: knowledge attributes (knowledge base and training); the autonomy attribute; and the service attributes (altruism, responsibility and ethics).

The knowledge attribute or ‘knowledge base’ refers to a teachers ‘craft knowledge’ or ‘practical pedagogy’ which is seen as primarily classroom based and practical (Sexton 2007).
The findings of this study are that regular teachers view ‘quality of teaching’ as providing an appropriate teaching environment through which the individual student can flourish and develop a sense of agency around their learning. There is evidence in educational literature that cognitive development occurs in schools when there is a dynamic interaction with the student’s physical, emotional, spiritual and social development (Jong and Kerr-Robieeck 2007). Weare (2000) refers to educators needing to be more dynamic and multi-modal in process. Ewan, one of the research participants, described multi-modal pedagogy as a ‘holistic approach’. He suggested that quality teaching is not just about preparing to teach your curriculum, you develop what he calls a ‘bag of tricks’ for an inclusive all encompassing education. Furthermore, one respondent in the Phase 1 survey described an appropriate teaching style as having “confidence, engaging students’ interest in a subject area, communicative teaching style, and approachable teaching manner” (see Appendix J). The quality of classroom based teaching emerged as a contributing factor to the success of a student. Moreover, the findings suggest that there is an issue with the quality of teaching being delivered if it does not meet the criteria for appropriate ‘knowledge based’ teaching. The 1998 Education Act clearly outlines that it is a requirement of the school to provide ‘quality’ education and effective individual teachers. Smyth et al (2007, 2011) highlight a mismatch between the more teacher-centred methodologies used by teachers and the more active methods that students find engaging. This study reveals that the regular teachers had no hesitation in indicating issues within their own profession in relation to the quality of the education being delivered. Therefore, it is clear from the findings that the regular teachers view the delivery of a quality education as an integral part of their professional role.

The second attribute of the professional role is the ‘autonomy’ with which regular teachers deliver pastoral care. Autonomy is a recognised feature of post-primary education and was reported as ‘legendary’ by the OECD (1991). The findings reveal that a regular teacher in the post-primary school has full autonomy in relation to the level at which they engage in a pastoral care role. However, this autonomy has diminished in recent times because of calls for greater accountability within the sector (Sexton 2007). This accountability has mainly been focused on teachers’ classroom based academic role (Smyth et al 2011). Furthermore, the past two decades have had an overarching focus on academics (Grove 2004). Derek, one of the participants, reported that even though he endeavoured to deliver a balanced pastoral care role, that if ‘push came to shove’, the balance may shift due to the socially driven
pressure on academic attainment. It emerged in the research that the autonomy of the regular teachers has been a positive contributing factor to their provision of a pastoral care role. Three participants, Anthony, Bill and Frank described working at an in-depth level with students around: exam stress; peer issues; bullying; relationship and home issues. Bill detailed how a regular teacher should work autonomously, "the teacher has a clear understanding of what has actually happened and what their role is and the different levels that it takes".

The findings illustrate that the regular teachers have very clear individual boundaries around their work and their autonomous role. The general view in the literature is that a teacher providing a pastoral care role in remedial and prevention support work can be an invaluable support (Smyth et al 2011; Hui 2002; Best et al 1995). The professional autonomy of the regular teacher is viewed as a contributing factor to the success of countries like Finland, which is renowned for the quality of their education system (Smyth et al 2011). However, students who may want to discuss a problem are often met with a teacher who underestimates this type of support (Fox and Butler 2007). In summary, the findings suggest that the regular teachers deliver a non uniform autonomous pastoral care role in the post-primary school. Conversely, it may be postulated that individual students might benefit from a more integrated approach being delivered by the regular teachers.

The third attribute of teacher professionalism is the ‘service attribute’ (altruism, responsibility and ethics). This emerged as being prominent in a number of key areas of the findings. The regular teachers in this study fervently viewed the service attribute as a key element of their professional role. This attribute refers to the ‘care’ and the ‘do’ aspect of pastoral care (Lodge and Watkins 1997). Section 5.1.2 of this chapter presented the importance of extracurricular activities in supporting holistic development. Similarly, the findings illustrate that the provision of an appropriate ‘duty of care’ was an essential element for delivering a quality PSE education in the post-primary school. The UK DES (1989, p.3) refers to the promotion of pastoral care through “the nature of relationships amongst pupils, teachers and adults other than teachers: through arrangements for monitoring pupils”. This ‘duty of care’ has been referred to by the current Minister of Education, post Budget 2012, within the context of a WSA. In this study, ‘duty of care’ was revealed as a very human level of interaction between regular teachers and students. This was articulated by one of the regular teachers:
The findings support Watts (1986, cited in Watts and Kidd 2000) assertion that the regular teachers perceive that they offer a level of guidance to their students outside of their traditional classroom role. The teacher/student relationship was seen as an essential aspect of this role. It is evident from the literature that a positive teacher/student relationship can influence a student’s educational success (Byrne and Smyth 2010; Smyth et al 2004; Gorson and Grant 1997). Likewise, the NEWB (2008) emphasises that when a relationship of trust is fostered between a regular teacher and a student, the student is able to grow stronger in the process. The regular teachers in this study support this view. Nonetheless, the findings also demonstrate that when a teacher did not foster a supportive role it had a direct effect on the quality of education being delivered; the success of the individual student; the stress levels of the students and the quality of pastoral care being delivered. Interestingly, a model of support offered to students that emerged in the study was a non-traditional pastoral care support referred to as ‘observing’ and ‘checking in’. Lam and Hui (2010) argue that this type of support is a salient aspect of a WSA to guidance counselling in Hong Kong, and it can prevent student issues escalating, support personal development and value formation. Anthony and Bill referred to this support as ‘scooping up’ the students that could be ‘brushed away’, as a preventative measure for students getting lost in a big school. Frank described it as a moral dimension:

I see it as my role I can’t turn around and ignore it if they are crying and that. I am not going to ignore it. Am.............you deal with it and over the years you get more experienced you make less mistakes. You still make mistakes.

(Frank)

Frank used the term “I am going to deal with it”. Additionally, in the findings of this study this responsibility was described with the word ‘should’, for example “a teacher ‘should’ always be available to provide support for students” (see Appendix J). This ‘responsibility’ felt by regular teachers was deemed as a major influence for providing a pastoral care or ‘service attribute’ role.

However, in the findings the level of responsibility expressed differed amongst participants. Bill referred to his life as a school student being traumatic and expressed that school was a ‘safe zone’ for him. Consequently, he felt he had an intrinsic responsibility for delivering a more in-depth loco parentis role. Likewise, Frank disclosed experiences about his formative
years and his parent’s separation. He also delivered a deeper supportive role and referred to the students being ‘like his babies’. This suggests a parallel correlation between the regular teachers previous life experiences and the level at which they offer pastoral care, therefore demonstrating that they take their work very seriously.

The role of regular teachers is outlined in the Children First National Guidelines (2011) as providing initial explorative work. The findings suggest that the regular teachers are delivering on this role in the post-primary school at different levels. Finney (2006) argues that guidelines in the area of teacher support are often vague and teachers feel that they are primarily educators and pastoral care work was for ‘experts’. With regards to boundaries, the findings suggest that regular teachers are clear on the process of referral. However, the current model in the researched post-primary school has inconsistencies around the levels of pastoral care being delivered by each regular teacher.

Since the Intermediate Education Act (1914) the governance and regulation of the teacher’s role has evolved. Previous to this a teacher could deliver any subject on a curriculum once they were registered (Coolahan 1981). The model and pedagogies delivered in educational training have also evolved from an authority based model in the early 1990’s to the current dynamic multi-modal all encompassing approach encouraged today (Smyth and McCoy 2011; Coolahan 1981). There was a consensus amongst the research participants that there was a deficit in the quality of PSE education delivered in their initial teacher education (ITE). For example, Carol referred to feeling stressed and inadequately trained to deal with an accidental death during her initial training. Overall, the regular teachers felt their practical teacher training experience was lacking a formal mentoring support whilst in the school pre-qualification. The White Paper on Education (1995) recommends a major overhaul of pre- and in service education. Likewise, Sexton (2007) recognises that the area of teacher training requires reform. In the recent DES (2012c) review of initial teacher education (ITE) a number of recommendations have been put forward:

1. Teacher education should be facilitated in six universities.
2. The strengthening of the school placement experience at under graduate level through the development of partnerships and linking in with the ‘Teaching Council’s policy on the continuum of Teacher Education’ and ‘Initial Teacher Education: Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers’.
3. Finally, it recommends setting up systematic links to clinical practice in field schools. In addition, it is envisaged that teachers will familiarise themselves with current research and develop practitioner research on critical areas of teacher education.

The report does not address aspects of teacher education such as curricula, policy, funding or the continuing professional development (CPD) of teachers because it was outside of its remit. In contrast, the research findings suggest that the main content of teacher education is subsequent to beginning their career teaching through learning on the ground and interacting with students. Additionally, the findings support the assertion that the regular teachers would benefit from CPD. This correlates with Sexton’s (2007) findings on the need for CPD. Bill describes the importance of CPD as: “training and understanding is very important for a teacher. While a teacher could want to do well they could end up doing more harm”. In particular, the findings are that regular teachers consider appropriate CPD in the area of pastoral care as extremely beneficial, if it is delivered appropriately advocating small group seminars with a focus around pastoral care fundamentals.

5.3 Whole School Approach (WSA) to Guidance Counselling

The central aim of WSA to guidance counselling is to support a student’s ‘personal, social, emotional’ (PSE), vocational and educational development (DES 2012a; Lohrmann et al 2008; Jong and Kerr-Roubicecek 2007; Rowe et al 2007; Watkins 1994). Similarly, in an Irish context the word pastoral care is often used with guidance counselling (Collins and McNiff 1999). This is validated by the findings of this study whereby the regular teachers’ terminology for their involvement in a WSA to guidance counselling is often referred to as pastoral care. Therefore, it is important to discuss the area of WSA to guidance counselling through a synthesised analysis of the literature and findings related to the post-primary school context.

5.3.1 Defining a Whole School Approach (WSA) to Guidance Counselling for the Post Primary School

The humanistic rationale emanating from the literature for the delivery of a WSA to guidance counselling has a central focus on integrating guidance within a curricular based approach (Watkins 1994; McGuinness 1989). In contrast, the Irish model infuses this ideal with the dispersed responsibilities of the whole school community. The findings of this study develop this description further describing a WSA to guidance counselling as: involving the entire
school community, all members of teaching staff and all stakeholders through pastoral care structures. This aligns more with the eastern perspective, where teachers and school personnel are directed to become involved in student guidance responsibilities. The eastern rationale of a WSA to guidance counselling is to foster a students’ holistic development, not just a curricular based model (Lam and Hui 2010; Hui 2002). Additionally, the findings emphasise a ‘caring’ culture in the researched post-primary school which also correlates with Lam and Hui’s (2010) idea of a ‘love and care’ culture in eastern schools. However, a dichotomy emerged in the findings in relation to whose responsibility the regular teachers thought it was to develop and deliver a WSA, the Guidance Counsellor or the whole school community.

5.3.2 Defining the Role of a Guidance Counsellor in a WSA to Guidance Counselling

The central aspect of early vocational guidance was in providing and supporting career decision making (Savickas 2008). In this study, the findings support the ‘career choice’ element as a major aspect of the role of the Guidance Counsellor. Watt and Kidd (2000) separate the role of the Guidance Counsellor into the following elements ‘personal, educational and vocational’. Similarly, the NCCA (2007) apply three elements ‘personal, educational and career’ in outlining the different areas of whole school guidance. However, the regular teachers perceived distinct elements within the role i.e. educational/vocational guidance and personal guidance. They articulate that the area of personal guidance refers to working with students who are dealing with ‘issues from home/school’; “with personal and sensitive issues”; “major emergencies” and “ongoing issues” (see Appendix J). Educational/vocational guidance was referred to as: guiding students with CAO forms; career choices; information on further education/training; and personal development related to helping students to become aware of their ‘talents and abilities’. As has been argued by Watts and Kidd (2000) the potential fault lines that exist between these distinctions may be a source of contestation and as a result may prove to be a challenge to a WSA to guidance counselling.

Since Budget 2012 the term ‘appropriate guidance’ is currently central to the discourse on the provision of guidance counselling in post-primary education. In Section 9(C) of the Education Act (1998), ‘appropriate guidance’ is confirmed as a statutory responsibility for the whole school community. The pastoral care role that regular teachers provide adheres to the requirement outlined in section 5.1 of this Chapter. The findings are that 84% of the...
respondents in the Phase 1 survey either strongly agreed or tended to agree that this was a whole school responsibility. Additionally, all of the interviewees supported this view. Therefore, it is important to establish the perceptions of regular teachers on the distinctions between personal, educational and vocational guidance in relation to the delivery of appropriate guidance in a WSA context.

5.3.3 Personal Guidance Counselling in the Post-Primary School

'Personal guidance' was described in the findings as the counselling aspect of guidance counselling in relation to personal crisis experienced by students. Similarly, the DES (2005b) describes counselling as an intervention offered at times of personal crisis. Moreover, it is also a facility to empower students to develop coping strategies to resolve issues within their own lives. The area of counselling is presented in literature as a key aspect of the Guidance Counsellor's role. Furthermore, the NCGE describe counselling delivered by Guidance Counsellors in schools as:

"In counselling, the guidance practitioner gives professional support to help those experiencing personal difficulties and to promote their personal growth and wellbeing." (NCGE 2011, p.4)

The findings of this study reveal variations between the term 'counselling' and 'when a student requires counselling'. Firstly, the regular teachers supported the DES (2005b) and NCGE (2011) descriptions of the term counselling and referred to the Guidance Counsellor being a member of staff qualified to 'listen' and offer support in a secure safe environment. In contrast, the regular teachers indicated that a student required counselling during times of personal trauma or crisis. Similarly, the literature emphasises that the Guidance Counsellor has a requirement to be skilled in providing support to a student dealing with a personal crisis. This supports the general view that crisis counselling amounts to a high percentage of one to one time delivered by Guidance Counsellors (OECD 2004). However, Zaccaria (1969, cited in Baker 1996) argues that the emphasis should be more on preventative counselling. This view was only shared by two regular teachers in the survey who argued that counselling should be available whenever students require it. However, in the participants' narratives there were inconsistencies as to at what point a student would be referred to a Guidance Counsellor. Carol, Derek and Ewan were very clear that they referred all personal issues to the Guidance Counsellor, rather than get into deep explorative work with the student. In contrast, Anthony, Bill and Frank suggested that they would work more in-depth with a student up to a certain point, and then refer the student to the Guidance Counsellor. The
findings suggest that this reflects the level of experience gained by the individual regular teachers from working in a supportive role with students. In addition, it highlights that there may be issues in relation to the referral system within the post-primary school and regular teachers would benefit from a clarification as to when it is appropriate to refer a student. Additionally, the post-primary community would benefit from information on the different aspects of personal guidance central to the work of the Guidance Counsellor.

5.3.4 Educational/ Vocational Guidance Counselling in the Post-Primary School

As stated earlier, a distinction can be made between educational and vocational guidance (Watts and Kidd 2000). However, in applying the aspects of the OECD (2004) definition both terms can be described as: making educational, training and occupational choices, managing their careers and reflecting on their ambitions, interests, qualifications and abilities. In contrast, the regular teachers perceived the area of educational and vocational guidance to be predominantly around supporting decision making and advising students around their 'career choices'. Furthermore, the regular teachers mainly see the term 'guidance' in the same light with very few referring to the personal development aspect of guidance. In the findings, the majority of the interviewees affirmed the view that they would have no reservations in offering an aspect of educational and vocational guidance. Bill spoke about the career decision aspect as follows:

I would always have told my 6th years if you want to do something in life go talk to the people and do it. If you want to know about education then go talk to the teachers. .................. So I think that the experiences of a teacher are very important for guiding students into their career path.

(Bill)

This view of guidance can be considered to be mainly output driven, similar to a Leaving Certificate subject. In a Leaving Certificate subject students are supported and advised through the curriculum towards completing the exam. In summary, the findings suggest that regular teachers see guidance not just as the role of the Guidance Counsellor but as part of their role as well. Therefore, the concern is the lack of formal guidance counselling training received by regular teachers that would equip them to provide such a role.

5.3.5 The Role of the Guidance Counsellor in the Post-Primary School

The findings illuminate further the perceptions of the regular teacher to the role of the Guidance Counsellor. The role was not just seen as a service for the students, but also for the design and delivery of a WSA to guidance counselling. The literature on policy and practice recommends that the Guidance Counsellor should be consulted and have an active role in
school guidance planning (Hayes and Morgan 2011; OECD 2004). Furthermore, Guidance Counsellors need to be more informed in relation to ‘Whole School Guidance Planning and Policies’ (Hayes and Morgan 2011). The DES Inspectorate has revealed that a relatively high percentage of schools did not have an appropriate written policy in place concerning a WSA to Guidance Counselling (Hayes and Morgan 2011; DES 2009). It recommends that other qualified members of staff should be included as part of ‘Whole School Planning’ and this view was strongly supported by other stakeholders, in particular the NCGE (DES 2009). In this study, whilst the quality of the delivery of the guidance service was endorsed, the regular teachers argued that the Guidance Counsellors were not involved enough in the promotion and in-house training of a WSA to guidance counselling. Moreover, the findings suggest that this was viewed by the regular teachers as the Guidance Counsellor’s role, rather than having outside professionals provide this service. For example, Anthony referred to the Guidance Counsellor as the ‘most professional’ and appropriately trained to deliver pastoral care training in the school. Interestingly, the consensus that emerged from the narratives was that if the Guidance Counselling professionals were to coordinate and become more involved in pastoral care training in the school, it would encourage more regular teachers to get involved in providing pastoral care.

Worryingly, the role of the Guidance Counsellor in the school was suggested in the findings to be a discreet service shrouded in a veil of secrecy. Ewan referred to the service as being like a ‘ghost’ and remarked that he was unclear as to the elements of the role. Confidentiality was presented as a topic of contention amongst the interviewees, with the lack of information being seen as a hindrance to them offering appropriate support and feeling empowered in their pastoral role. Anthony and Bill affirmed this assertion that the regular teachers in the post-primary school were not given the full story.

The guidelines and ethics for Guidance Counsellors around confidentiality are clearly outlined as: “establish secure, effective and ethical systems for maintaining the confidentiality of client records” (NCGE 2011, p.7). However, Hayes and Morgan (2011) reports that school policies around counselling are not well developed. Additionally, they highlight that in a number of cases the Guidance Counsellor decides policies around critical issues such as consent and confidentiality, rather than the school management structures. They also emphasise that the IGC (2012a) ‘Code of Ethics’ outline the areas of best practice for Guidance Counsellors. The findings suggest that the policy in the researched post-
primary school is to reveal enough information to regular teachers while protecting confidentiality for the student.

The delivery of a WSA to Guidance Counselling involves all stakeholders in the school community and it is recommended that a coherent programme for its delivery is in place (OECD 2004). The WSA policies and practice currently in place in the post-primary school are both structural and curricular. The regular teachers verified in the findings that these structures were working well in the school.

The post-primary school’s pastoral care structures which emerged were: Assistant Deans; Deans; two Guidance Counsellors; Personal Safety Board (PSB). Student Support Team (SST), Deputy Principal and Principal. Additionally, there were other supports such as the Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) and the Schools Completions Programme (SCP). The HSCL and SCP are as a direct result of the post-primary schools status as a DEIS school. The rationale of the DEIS Action Plan is based on an ‘inclusive, high quality education’ and for the individual student to reach their educational potential (DES 2005a). These extra structures were endorsed as having an integral role in the delivery of pastoral care. Additionally, a number of the regular teachers were involved in the Junior Certificate Schools Programme (JCSP). The JCSP helps identify students who may require extra pastoral supports and allows for a suitably designed curriculum to be implemented (DES 2005a). The findings highlight that regular teachers are willing to integrate pastoral care elements into their curriculum where possible and in some cases elements were already integrated. The DES (2012a) recommends that key WSA guidance elements should be integrated into a coherent programme and advises that this should be in consultation with the Guidance Counsellor. In the interviews participants stated that they have already integrated WSA elements in their programmes and that they support the assertion that this should be compulsory.

5.4 Implications of Budget 2012 for Guidance Counselling Provision
The literature on WSA to guidance counselling emphasises that all stakeholders in the school community should be involved in the process and the Guidance Counsellor was seen as integral to the delivery of a WSA to pastoral care and the delivery of ‘appropriate guidance’. However, as a result of the changes in Budget 2012 there has been a policy and paradigm shift in the provision of ‘appropriate guidance’ from individual ‘Guidance Counsellors’ to
‘WSA to Guidance Counselling’ (DES 2012a). The implications of Budget 2012 were a key theme that emerged in the findings. The interviewee’s revealed that they already saw the guidance service under pressure for a large post-primary school. Furthermore, Bill and Anthony emphasised that the current provision was already inappropriate for the school. The four main concerns for the regular teachers relating to Budget 2012 that emerged in the findings were:

1. **Pressure on regular teachers to deliver a diverse academic and pastoral care role**

   In response to Budget 2012 the DES is now placing a stronger emphasis on the pastoral care role of regular teachers. At the same time there has been a stronger policy focus placed on academics in the last number of decades (Grove 2004). Research has shown that academic achievement outcomes for individual students vary according to their teachers (Day et al. 2007). The findings reveal that the regular teachers in the post-primary school are currently professionally stretched in the following areas: delivering their curriculum; exam results; extracurricular activities; membership of a pastoral care team; and their service attributes. Consequently, time pressure was reported as an issue for the regular teachers participating in a WSA to guidance counselling.

2. **WSA to guidance counselling and pastoral care profile will diminish in the post-primary school**

   The importance of the Guidance Counsellor’s role in the promotion, development and delivery of a WSA to guidance counselling was emphasised in the findings. Accordingly, the literature affirms this view and recommends that the Guidance Counsellor should have an integral role in ‘Whole School Guidance Planning’ (NCGE 2011; OECD 2004, DES 1996). Management authorities have been advised to implement a WSA to guidance counselling to maximise resources in the post-primary school (DES 2012b). Conversely, this supports the assertion that there is a disconnect between policy and practice. The primary findings suggest that if the Guidance Counsellors’ profile is diminished then the pastoral care profile in the school will be affected. Moreover, the IGC postulate that the lack of uniformity will automatically result in a reduction of quality standards (IGC 2012b). Additionally, the concepts of ‘equality in education’ and ‘appropriate guidance’ established in the Education Act 1998 will also be compromised because students who can afford private sector guidance will benefit (McCarthy 2012).
3. The levels of involvement of regular teachers in a WSA to guidance counselling

The practitioner professionalism role of the teacher involves the knowledge, autonomy and service attributes (Sexton 2007). The findings are that the majority of regular teachers in the researched school are compliant in providing an autonomous altruistic pastoral care role. However, post Budget 2012, regular teachers roles are expected to expand further without additional training or resources. Three participants, Anthony, Bill and Frank endorse that Guidance Counsellors are specifically trained to provide an in-depth supportive role and that some regular teachers would prefer not to be too involved in this level of support.

The TUI (2007) are in favour of a cross curricular approach to guidance and acknowledges that regular teachers have appropriate skills for the provision of general guidance such as curricular delivery and providing subject based advice. In contrast, the findings revealed that there is a deficit in the ‘guidance’ elements of the regular teachers’ initial teacher education (ITE). In this study, the regular teachers reported they received most of their training through experiences subsequent to their initial training. However, the TUI does sustain the view that regular teachers should have no involvement in counselling and that “one to one sessions” should fall under the remit of a qualified Guidance Counsellor (TUI 2007, p.4).

The Children First: National Guidelines (2011) refer to ‘explorative’ work as the level of service a regular teacher should provide. Similarly, Lam and Hui (2010) argue that regular teachers should be involved in remedial work. Hui (2002) states that a ‘lack of skill’ and competence in handling and supporting students was a recurrent theme in her eastern based study. Similarly, this theme emerged in this western study and is suggested as a reason for the participation or non-participation of regular teacher to a WSA to guidance counselling. There appears to be a deficit in relation to any guidelines or supportive methodologies emanating from the DES or other stakeholders that will assist a regular teacher to adapt to their changing pastoral care role.

4. Deficit of provision of appropriate guidance and support

In the findings there is a clear suggestion that the appropriate guidance received by a student pre Budget 2012 will be significantly different from that provided post Budget
2012. The assertion by the DES(2012) that the service will not be affected as a result of refocusing school resources through a WSA to guidance counselling is not supported in the findings of this study. This is described by one regular teacher graphically as follows:

You take that away and now that child is left completely alone. They now then have the worry of to source someone else or the worry of never sourcing anyone else again not expressing anything in school.

(Anthony)

Preventative counselling and empowerment programmes are envisioned as the most appropriate method of supporting students (NCGE 2011; DES 2005b; Zaccaria, cited in Baker 1996). The findings suggest that post Budget 2012 the Guidance Counsellor will be curtailed considerably in providing this level of service. Therefore, it may be envisaged that the Guidance Counsellors’ service to students may mainly consist of crisis counselling. As a result, the findings suggest that the students will have to rely on other supports either from regular teachers who are currently professionally stretched, or alternative external agencies.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the four overarching themes that emerged in relation to the issues that effect the participation of regular teachers in a WSA to guidance counselling. The issues which were examined through a critical engagement with the literature and the primary findings provide a number of key insights into the area of WSA to guidance counselling in a post-primary school. The findings explicate the disconnect between educational policy delivered in Budget 2012 and the future provision of a WSA to guidance counselling in the post-primary sector. It has been established that regular teachers view the Guidance Counsellor as a focal point for the pastoral care provision in the school. It is evident from the findings that the regular teachers in the researched post-primary school currently offer an invaluable pastoral care service. However, there are clear differences in the levels of pastoral care provided by the regular teachers linked to the following reasons: the deficit in pastoral care training provided; professional pressures to deliver their academic traditional role; experiences gained subsequent to initial training; and their boundaries around pastoral care work. The discussion emphasises that any reduction in the Guidance Counselling service directly effects the participation of regular teachers and the quality of ‘appropriate guidance’ delivered in the researched post-primary school. Chapter 6 presents the overall conclusions of the study and outlines recommendations for policy and practice.
Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.0 Introduction
The purpose of this chapter is to provide a conclusion within the context of the aim and objectives of this study. It presents the strengths and limitations of the study, and addresses a number of implications for policy and practice. In addition, this chapter proposes a number of recommendations informed by the primary findings and the literature. Finally, a reflexive examination is presented of the study from the researchers’ perspective.

6.1 Summary of findings
The overall aim of this study was to examine the perceptions of regular teachers of a whole school approach (WSA) to guidance counselling. Furthermore, a number of objectives were identified to address the overall aim. The model of case study applied was based on Stake’s (1995) ‘intrinsic model’ which allowed for a more in-depth exploration of the ‘real life’ context of a WSA to guidance counselling (Simons 2009; Yin 2009). In the study a mixed method approach was adopted which consisted of two phases of data collection. Phase 1 involved the administration of an online questionnaire through SurveyMonkey. The design was informed by the literature in order to extrapolate the perceptions of thirty regular teachers working in the case school. In Phase 2 six regular teachers were interviewed to provide a more in-depth description of the phenomenon.

Four themes that emerged in the study elucidated the key issues of the topic. These themes were:

1. Delivery of a holistic education experience
2. The pastoral care role of regular teachers in the post-primary school
3. Whole school approach (WSA) to guidance counselling
4. Implications of Budget 2012 guidance counselling provision

6.1.1 Delivery of a Holistic Education Experience
A quality education is delivered in a school that provides an environment which caters for all aspects of the individual student (Smyth and McCoy 2011). In this study Miller’s (2000) ‘levels of wholeness’ were applied as parameters for gauging the delivery of a quality education that supports a student’s development intellectually, socially and personally. The term ‘appropriate guidance’ refers to the statutory requirement for the whole school community to provide a quality ‘holistic’ education for each individual student (Education
Act 1998). The regular teachers in this study positioned ‘appropriate guidance’ and ‘holistic education’ as central to the delivery of a quality education which encourages students to flourish and excel. One regular teacher, Bill, articulated that teaching is not about working with ‘little machines’ to achieve A’s and B’s, but helping to develop the whole person of the student through engagement, caring and providing extracurricular activities. Conversely, the policy direction currently adopted by the DES represents a shift in focus from a ‘holistic education’ towards a model focused on delivering academic graduates for the ‘knowledge society’ (DES 2012b; Miller 2004).

6.1.2 The Pastoral Care Role of Regular Teachers in the Post-Primary School

‘Pastoral care’ is an ‘age old’ adage often included in post-primary school literature, relating to the Latin term ‘pastor’ meaning ‘shepherd’. In this study 80% of the regular teachers articulated that the pastoral care role was an important part of their professional role. Furthermore, the ‘do’ element of pastoral care was delivered in the post-primary case school through the ‘loco parentis’ role of the regular teachers. This role was described by the participants as developing the human relationships with students through which the regular teachers could ‘observe’ and ‘check in’ with them if required. This supports Sexton’s (2007) assertion that the professionalism of teachers contains three attributes: the ‘knowledge’ attribute, ‘autonomy’ attribute and the ‘service’ attribute. The autonomy and service attributes (altruism, responsibility and ethics) can be described within the pastoral care role of a regular teacher. The Teaching Council (2011) refers briefly to aspects of these attributes within the context of ‘professional values and relationships’. However, there appears to be no definitive policy or guidelines in the literature for the delivery of these three attributes.

This study revealed that the post-primary school depends heavily on teachers’ altruism, with many regular teachers volunteering in a number of pastoral care teams. Therefore, there were a number of key differences at the level at which some of the regular teachers offered pastoral care. These differences were:

- Some regular teachers delivered initial explorative work with students, while others referred students immediately to the Guidance Counsellor.
- Some teachers developed a pastoral care role through extracurricular activities (ECA) whilst other teachers offered pastoral care within the confines of their subject area.
- A number of teachers felt comfortable offering an in-depth pastoral care role, whilst other teachers articulated that they would leave it to the ‘experts’.
Sexton (2007) contends that it is the responsibility of the teaching profession to be proactive in shaping educational policy. What has emerged in this study is that there is a deficit in the area of national policy with regard to addressing the developing professional ‘duty of care’ role of the regular teacher. The Teaching Council Act (2001 7(2) (b)) highlights that one of its main functions is ‘the professional conduct of teachers and promotion of ‘Continuing Professional Development’ (CPD).’ However, this study elucidates that there is a dearth in the pastoral care training of regular teachers in the case school in their initial training and afterwards. There is recognition by the DES (2012c) that aspects of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) require reform. Whilst, the DES states that the areas of curricula, policy, funding and the CPD of teachers required review, it was outside of its remit (2012c). This supports the assertion that there is a deficit in the quality of pastoral care ITE and CPD being provided.

6.1.3 Whole School Approach (WSA) to Guidance Counselling

The model of WSA to guidance counselling as outlined by the NCCA (2007) is based on an integration of guidance counselling into the curriculum aligned with the humanistic tradition (Watkins 1994; McGuinness 1989). However, this study revealed that the model of WSA being delivered in the case school applies the central curricular aspects of the humanistic western tradition as well as demonstrating the ‘caring’ and ‘fuh-douh (assist and guide)’ elements of the eastern collectivist tradition as described by Hui (2002). Additionally, the consensus among the regular teachers was that the delivery of ‘appropriate guidance’ was a whole school responsibility which aligns with the DES (2011) guidelines. Therefore, the post-primary case school would be considered as an exemplar of ‘good practice’ according to the DES (2009).

One element that supported a “whole school response” within the case school is its pastoral care structures. These structures are: the PSB (Personal Safety Board) which delivers a WSA to anti bullying; the SST (Student Support Team) which focuses on students at risk; the Dean and Assistant Deans who deliver pastoral care support; and Extracurricular Activities (ECA) delivered by regular teachers across a number of disciplines. The school relies heavily on the altruistic nature of the regular teachers to participate in these structures without any financial incentive. It also receives additional pastoral care supports due to its DEIS status which include: the Home School Community Liaison (HSCL); Schools Completion Programme (SCP); and the Junior Certificate Schools Programme (JCSP). Consequently, the
quality of WSA to guidance counselling currently being delivered relies heavily on the altruism and commitment of staff and the DEIS status of the school.

The Guidance Counsellor’s role in the case school appears to be multifarious. The study suggests that it is integral to the design and delivery of a WSA to guidance counselling. Similarly, the NCGE (2011) recommends that the Guidance Counsellor should have a key role integrating guidance elements into a coherent programme. The profile of the Guidance Counsellor was presented in the study as being prominent in all of the pastoral care structures delivering a supportive, advisory and coordinating role. However, one of the participants, Ewan, articulated that a direct effect of Budget 2012 would be that the profile of guidance counselling and pastoral care would diminish in the post-primary school.

The concept of best practice relates to the Guidance Counsellor having an active role in whole school guidance planning (Hayes and Morgan 2011; OECD 2004). The regular teachers acknowledged that they received support and guidance from the Guidance Counsellor while delivering a pastoral care role. However, an area of contention for some of the regular teachers was the level of communication that they received from the Guidance Counsellor in relation to student issues. This illuminates a possible fault line that exists between regular teachers and the Guidance Counsellors in the case school. It also highlights a potential challenge for the wider guidance counselling profession in providing a WSA to guidance counselling while respecting the profession’s ‘Code of Ethics’ (IGC 2012a).

In summary, some of the literature indicates that regular teachers are appropriately skilled to provide some aspects of guidance such as: the delivery of a guidance curriculum; provide advice around subject specific areas; and on an informal basis offer advice and information (ACCS et al 2012; DES 2012a; TUI 2007; DES 1996). In contrast, other areas of the literature confirm that the Guidance Counsellor is the only member of staff sufficiently trained to provide certain elements of guidance counselling; such as: vocational guidance, specialised guidance curriculum, career advice, empowerment programmes; and personal counselling (DES 2012a; Hayes and Morgan 2011; DES 2009). Moreover, regular teachers in this study revealed that they have not received any specialised training in their ITE or subsequently and therefore feel ill-equipped to deliver areas of guidance counselling in the case school.
6.1.4 Implications of Budget 2012 on Guidance Counselling Provision

Since the Budget 2012 announcement a clear disconnect has emerged between the policies developed by the DES and what is happening on the ground. The severe cuts delivered by the DES to the provision of guidance counselling without initial explorative research or a structural framework through which these changes can be delivered are evident. A WSA may suffer from a lack of focus unless the Guidance Counsellor is allocated an ex-quota provision to offer support and advice (IGC 2012b). The statutory responsibility to provide 'appropriate guidance' has been seriously affected by Budget 2012. Four main concerns post Budget 2012 have emerged for the regular teacher in this study:

1. Regular teachers are currently already under pressure to deliver a diverse academic and pastoral care role.
2. WSA to guidance counselling and pastoral care supports will be effected in the post-primary school,
3. The regular teacher may be required to provide a greater pastoral care role within a WSA to guidance counselling.
4. A deficit will develop in the provision of 'appropriate guidance’ and pastoral care support in the school.

There is pressure currently on the teaching profession to adapt and change with the current emphasis on providing graduates suitable for the knowledge economy. Therefore, regular teachers could be faced with a choice, and as a result may feel pressurised either to provide a greater pastoral care role or withdraw from volunteering for pastoral care support work. Consequently, whilst a WSA to guidance counselling may be presented as the panacea by the DES, the findings from this study indicate diminished quality in the pastoral care and guidance counselling provision in the case school.

6.2 Strengths and Limitations of the study

6.2.1 Strengths of the Study

The 'single case study' research frame was a key strength of this study as it supported an in-depth exploration of a 'real life' phenomenon (Simmons 2009; Yin 2009). Additionally, the application of Stake's (1995) intrinsic model allowed for the development of rich insights within the school site.
Another key strength was that the researcher had worked in the post-primary school for eight years and had a professional relationship with the participants. This resulted in achieving a level of depth in the narratives that might otherwise have been harder to develop.

This study aimed to address a research gap by considering the perceptions of regular teachers of a WSA to guidance counselling from a western perspective. It builds on studies by Hui (2002) and Lam and Hui (2010) who explored this area from an eastern perspective. Additionally, it contributes to the area of the guidance counselling research base which is slowly being established in Ireland.

Finally, this study attempted to illuminate the perceptions of regular teachers of a WSA to Guidance Counselling based in one post-primary DEIS school. Even though, the study presented issues related to one case site, it may provide other Guidance Counsellors avenues to reflect upon and apply within their own fields (Cohen et al 2011; Merriam 2009).

6.2.2 Limitations of the Study

The application of a single case study provides outcomes and reflections for the post-primary case school itself in which the researcher works. Therefore, the subjectivity of the researcher may be viewed as a limitation (Cohen et al 2011; Yin 2009; Merriam 2009). A reflexive approach was applied to address researcher bias in this study.

The regular teachers who volunteered for the interviews demonstrated an altruistic attribute. Additionally, all of the interviewees were members of a pastoral care team. Therefore, they had an interest in the research topic. Equally, Lam and Hui (2010) highlighted a similar limitation in their study.

The sampling group were thirty ‘regular teachers’ working in the post primary school which only reflects their perceptions of a WSA to guidance counselling, not all the stakeholders in the school. A further study could encompass the entire school community and provide a more diverse reflection on the phenomenon.

The data consisted of self reporting online surveys and six one hour interviews. As a result a large percentage of the data was qualitative, consequently nomothetic coding and theme mapping was applied for data analysis. This consists of the researcher analysing using patterns, trends, commonalities to name a few. Therefore, a limitation of this study may be
the researchers’ subjective interpretation of data (Cohen et al 2011; Miles and Huberman 1994).

6.3 Recommendations
The following are recommendations for policy, best practice and research:

1. The cuts outlined in Budget 2012 should be revisited and the ex-quota allocation of guidance counselling reinstated to ensure students are provided with ‘appropriate guidance’.

2. The integral role of the Guidance Counsellor should be protected within the concept of a WSA to guidance counselling.

3. The recommendations for my own guidance service are: to promote the role of the Guidance Counsellor within the school; to ensure that all stakeholders have a clear understanding of the role; and to support the design and delivery of a WSA to guidance counselling post-primary school policy.

4. A scrutinisation of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) is required and deficits in CPD need to be addressed.

5. The Teaching Council in conjunction with the NCGE should provide regular teachers with a set of guidelines outlining the exact level of responsibilities that they have in the delivery of a WSA to guidance counselling. In addition the DES could support a WSA with appropriate CPD to address the ‘duty of care’ role which is now being mentioned in DES literature and policies.

6. The deficit in evidence based research in guidance counselling became evident post Budget 2012, especially with regards to a WSA to guidance counselling. Therefore, from a methodological perspective the study highlights a need within the field for similar case studies to be undertaken to create a stronger base to inform policy makers and practitioners.

7. Further research on the topic of ‘holistic education’ and WSA to guidance counselling from the perspective of teachers who are not members of a pastoral care programme is recommended.

6.4 Reflexivity in relation to personal learning
In this study a reflexive approach was applied to help provide a greater understanding of the phenomenon keeping in mind my personal, social and cultural context as a researcher (Etherington 2004). I applied Etherington’s (2004) fundamental model of ‘reflexivity’ which
consisted of using self-questioning, note taking and a research diary throughout the full involvement of the research.

At the initial stage of the research I had a number of preconceptions about the topic formulated around my own experiences as a teacher and a Guidance Counsellor in the case school. I believed that the regular teachers would resist the central ideal of a WSA to guidance counselling and that my own practice as a Guidance Counsellor would influence the study. However, I was surprised by the honesty and the caring nature of the regular teachers expressed in the two phases of the data collection. I also had initial concerns that the data collected may be influenced by me being a practitioner researcher. In contrast, the data was honest and revealed a number of aspects of my own practice. The areas from my own practice highlighted were: the promotion of the guidance counselling service within the school; communication between the Guidance Counsellors and the staff; acknowledge the valuable contribution that a 'regular teacher' can offer to the guidance service; development and promotion of guidance counselling policies within the school; and finally, involving more staff in 'Whole School Guidance Planning' within the school. Accordingly, the key learning about my own professional practice has resulted in positive outcome for me and will inform future delivery within the constraints of the current provision since Budget 2012.

6.5 Conclusion
This chapter concludes this single case study. It summarised the main findings of the study and, its strengths and limitations. In addition it has provided a number of recommendations for the field of education and guidance counselling as informed by the literature and primary findings. Lastly, this chapter discusses the positionality and reflexivity of the researcher.
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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Context of Post-Primary School

A1.0 Development of the DEIS Action Plan

The development of the DEIS action plan was as a result of work undertaken in 2002 in an inaugural meeting of the Educational Disadvantage Forum. The resulting strategy was entitled ‘An integrated and Effective Delivery of School-Based Inclusion Measures’ (DES 2003). This paper made a number of recommendations on a “consistent approach” for identifying disadvantaged schools in order to target effective supports (DES 2003, p.2). Consequently in 2005 ‘An Action Plan for Educational Inclusion’ (2005) document was delivered by the Department of Education and Science to address the educational needs of children and young people from disadvantaged communities.

A1.1 DEIS Action Plan Rationale

The DEIS Action Plan rationale originates in the delivery of a broadly based “inclusive, high quality education” that will enable educationally disadvantaged individuals to achieve their full educational potential, fulfilled lives and to contribute to Ireland’s “social economic development” (DESa 2005, p 15). National Anti-Poverty Strategy (NAPS 2001), Social partnership agreement (2006) and The Lisbon Strategy (2005) were central in driving educational reform and policy. NAPS (2001) identified a number of focused strategies to assist educational inclusion for people living with poverty. The Social Partnership Agreement (2006) created an environment in which education was seen as key for building a knowledge economy and the importance of investment in education for children from disadvantaged communities. Similarly the Lisbon Strategy (2005) acknowledged the importance of investing in education to affect change for educationally disadvantaged: “.....increase and improvement in effectiveness of investments in education; the reduction of early school leavers and of low achievers” (Lisbon Strategy 2005, p.25)

Requirements for a Post-primary School’s inclusion as a DEIS school.

In 2005 when the Action Plan was delivered the DES designed a standardised index for identifying schools so that they would be eligible for resources under DEIS. Weir (2006, p.2) describes the index as being based on “adding the estimate of total entry from poor backgrounds”. This index was built around a number of variables such as the socioeconomic
background of a number of students at entry, medical cards at Junior Cycle and the percentage retention rate to Senior Cycle (Weir 2006).

A1.2 Supports for DEIS post-primary schools

At the core of the Action Plan (DES 2011, p.1) is a standardised system for accessing a schools’ eligibility for DEIS and to identify the levels of disadvantage with an integrated School Support Programme (SSP). The DEIS interventions and supports include additional staffing allocation; funding; teaching hours; Junior Certificate Schools Programme (JCSP); support from a Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) and a School Completion Programme (SCP) (DES 2005a, p.29).

The advantages for a post-primary school to participate in the DEIS scheme are extensive (DES 2012; DEIS 2011; Barnardos 2009). The DES (2012) Inspectorate reports that participating schools experienced ‘significant measureable improvement in attendance rates’ (DES 2012, p.2). However, Barnardos (2009) argue that due to the fragmented nature of the criteria for selecting schools, supports do not automatically follow the child from primary into post-primary school. The following is a brief description of the main resource schemes available to the post-primary school:

(i) **Teaching Hours**

The term pupil teacher ratio (PTR) has been referred to by the OECD (2011, p.398) as the “ratio for students to teaching staff” and “how students are grouped within classes and team teaching”. The typical PTR of a post-primary school is 19:1 (19 students: 1 Teacher). DEIS schools receive a targeted support through a more favourable PTR of 18.25:1. The PTR for post-primary DEIS and non-DEIS post-primary schools remained unchanged in the Budget (DES 2012).

(ii) **Junior Certificate Schools Programme (JCSP)**

The Junior Certificate Schools Programme has its origins in the 1976 Early School Leaver’s Project initiated by the City of Dublin VEC through its Curriculum Development Unit (CDU). The main terms of reference is to ‘identify’ early ‘school leavers’ and ‘to design, implement and evaluate a curriculum suitable to the needs of the students’ (DES 2005a, p.17)
(iii) **Home School Liaison (HSCL)**

One essential element of the DEIS programme is forming firm links with stakeholders such as community links and parents. In 1990 the Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) scheme was developed to build on these links. The main aim of their role as described by the DES (1990) was to maximise children’s participation in school through promoting active co-operation between home, school and community agencies. The HSCL is a DEIS resource which works within the post-primary school to focus on the salient adults such as parents and guardians in children’s educational lives. In an evaluation by Ryan (2004) the programme indicates an increased parental involvement. However, in a later report Archer (2007) highlights that parents and guardians that would benefit from HSCL support were hard to target and bring into the scheme.

(iv) **School Completion Programme (SCP)**

Attendance and pupil retention is a consistent challenge for all post-primary schools. The School Completion Programme (SCP) was initiated in 2002 as a “bottom up” approach to reduce the risk of early school leavers. The SCP Officer works with a Local Management Committee (school-based, community, statutory and voluntary interests) to work intrinsically on plans and targeted supports to encourage pupil retention (DES 2004). The House of the Oireachtas on Education and Skills (2010) released a report on the SCP. It indicated that 95.5% of children that were targeted as early school leavers during the research period remained in school. However, Traveller children were three times more likely than others to leave school during this period.
Appendix B: Subject Information Sheet (Principal) and Consent Form (Principal)

University of Limerick

OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

Subject Information Sheet

Date: 26/03/2012

Title of research study

A CASE STUDY OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF REGULAR TEACHERS OF A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO GUIDANCE COUNSELLING IN A MID WEST POST PRIMARY SCHOOL.

I have read the Subject Information Letter and understand in detail the particulars of the research project. I understand that the identity of the teachers and the school will not be revealed at any stage in the reporting of the research study. The conditions involved in the research which are designed to protect the privacy of participants and respect their contributions are:

i. Participation is entirely voluntary

ii. Participants are free to withdraw at any time in the process and any contributions made will be subsequently destroyed.

iii. The interview will be kept strictly confidential and will be available only to the researcher and the research supervisor. Excerpts from the interview may be made part of the final research dissertation, but under no circumstances will names or any identifying characteristics be included.

iv. The questionnaire data will be kept strictly confidential and will be available only to the researcher and the supervisor. Excerpts from the questionnaire may be made part of the final research dissertation, but under no circumstances will names or any identifying characteristics be included.
I hereby give my consent for James Galvin to carry out this research in the school.

Signature: _______________________

Printed Name: ____________________

Date: ____________________________
Appendix C: Consent Form (Principal)

Initial letter

University of Limerick

OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

Subject Information Sheet (Principal)

Date: 26/03/2012

Title of research study

A CASE STUDY OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF REGULAR TEACHERS OF A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO GUIDANCE COUNSELLING IN A MID WEST POST PRIMARY SCHOOL.

Dear Principal,

I am currently undertaking an MA. in Guidance Counselling with the Department of Education and Professional Studies, University of Limerick. As part of my studies I must complete a research dissertation on a topic of interest to me and related to guidance counselling under the supervision of Dr. Lucy Hearne.

In my research, I aim to examine the perceptions of regular teachers on a whole school approach to guidance counselling in a post primary school. In order to gather this information and provide insights on the topic I would appreciate if you would agree to me carrying out this research in the school. This would involve a sample of 50 regular teachers filling in a questionnaire on survey monkey and a follow up interview with a smaller sample of the same group.
All information gathered will be held in the strictest of confidence and pseudonyms will be used. Interviews will be recorded and the data will be securely held under UL guidelines. Participation in the study is voluntary and participants can withdraw from the research at any time. The results from this research study will be reported in my thesis and may be disseminated through professional publication.

The collected data will be stored in a secure location approved by the University of Limerick. It is important to note that the school’s name and individual participants will not be used in the research and the school will not be identifiable to anyone other than those directly involved. Please note that the University is subject to the Freedom of Information Act and research procedures will adhere to the provision of the Data Protection Legislation.

If you have any queries or require further information on the research study, please contact me or my Supervisor:

Student Name: James Galvin  
Supervisor: Dr. Lucy Hearne  
Tel. No. 086 8981764  
Tel. No. 061 202 91  
Email: jgalvin@cco.ie  
Email: lucy.hearne@ul.ie

If you have any concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent source, you may contact:

Chairman Education and Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee  
EHS Faculty Office  
University of Limerick  
Tel (062) 234101  
Email: ehrsresearchethics@ul.ie

Yours sincerely,

James Galvin
Appendix D: Subject Information Email (Questionnaire Participant)

University of Limerick

OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

Subject Information Email (Questionnaire Participant)

Date: 28/3/2012

Title of research study

A CASE STUDY OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF REGULAR TEACHERS OF A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO GUIDANCE COUNSELLING IN A MID WEST POST PRIMARY SCHOOL.

Dear Colleague,

I am currently undertaking an MA. in Guidance Counselling with the Department of Education and Professional Studies, University of Limerick. As part of my studies I must complete a research dissertation on a topic of interest to me and related to guidance counselling under the supervision of Dr. Lucy Hearne.

In my research I aim to examine the perceptions of regular teachers on a whole school approach to guidance counselling in a post primary school. In order to gather this information and provide insights on the topic I would appreciate if you would agree to participate by completing a questionnaire and a possible interview on the topic.

The questionnaire should take approximately 25 minutes to complete and the questionnaire is available on SurveyMonkey by clicking on this link http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/example. All information gathered will be held in the strictest of confidence and the participants' identities will not be identified in the SurveyMonkey. Participation in the study
is voluntary. The results from this research will be reported in my thesis, presented to the school community and may be disseminated through professional publication.

The collected data will be stored in a secure location approved by the University of Limerick. It is important to note that the school’s name and individual participants will not be used in the research and the school will not be identifiable to anyone other than those directly involved. Please note that the University is subject to the Freedom of Information Act and research procedures will adhere to the provision of the Data Protection Legislation.

If you have any queries or require further information on the research study, please contact me or my Supervisor:

Student Name: James Galvin
Tel. No. 086 898 1764
Email: jgalvin@cco.ie

Supervisor: Dr. Lucy Hearne
Tel. No. 061 202 91
Email: lucy.hearne@ul.ie

If you have any concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent source, you may contact:

Chairman Education and Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee
EHS Faculty Office
University of Limerick
Tel (062) 234101
Email: ehrsresearchethics@ul.ie

Yours sincerely,

James Galvin
Appendix E: Survey from SurveyMonkey

Section 1: General Information

Thank you for agreeing to take part in my research study. This questionnaire is anonymous and confidential and should take approximately twenty five minutes to complete. Please answer all questions.

1. What is your gender?
   - [ ] male
   - [ ] female

2. How many years have you worked in education?
   - [ ] 0.5
   - [ ] 6-10
   - [ ] 11-15
   - [ ] 16-20
   - [ ] 21-25
   - [ ] 26-30
   - [ ] Over 30

3. What programmes do you teach in your school?
   - [ ] Junior Certificate
   - [ ] Leaving Certificate
   - [ ] Junior Certificate Schools Programme
   - [ ] Leaving Certificate Applied
   - [ ] Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme
   - [ ] Civic, Social and Political Education
   - [ ] Fourth Year
   - [ ] Post Leaving Certificate

4. Do you provide any extracurricular activities?
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No

   If yes please detail the extracurricular activity

5. What does education students mean to you?

6. Please state some of the crucial factors that affect the success of students?
Section 2: Pastoral care provision

7. Please state some of the crucial factors that affect the success of students?


8 Whose role do you think it is to provide pastoral care support to Students in your post primary school?

☐ Teacher
☐ Class tutor
☐ A teacher that you feel the student responds well to
☐ Guidance Counsellor
☐ Year Head
☐ School Completion Officer
☐ Home School Liaison
☐ Deputy Principal
☐ Principal

Other (please verify)


9 Have you ever held or do you hold a position on a pastoral care team?

☐ Yes
☐ No

If yes please give detail 9 (s)


10 If you answered yes to question 9, what year group contains the students that you most regularly offer pastoral care to?

☐ 1st Year
☐ 2nd Year
☐ 3rd Year
☐ 4th Year
☐ 5th Year
☐ 6th Year

☐ I currently feel I do not offer pastoral support as a teacher
11 What role do you think a teacher should play in providing pastoral support to students?

12 What do you understand is the role of the guidance counsellor?

13 What do you understand by the term guidance?

14 What do you understand by the term counselling?

15 When do you think a student requires counselling support in school?
Section 3: Whole School Guidance Counselling

16 What does the term whole school approach to guidance counselling mean to you?

17 Section 9 (C) of the education Act 1998 refers to the delivery of appropriate guidance as being “a whole school responsibility”. Appropriate guidance as the supporting of the “moral, spiritual, social and personal developments of students”.

In relation to 9(C) please indicate how you feel about this:

☐ Strongly agree
☐ Tend to agree
☐ Neither agree or disagree
☐ Tend to disagree
☐ Strongly disagree

18 What do you feel should be the role of the Department of Education and Skills in supporting teachers in the provision of a whole school approach to guidance counselling?

19 I would be willing to participate in an interview on the topic?
☐ Yes
☐ No thanks

If yes please fill in your name below
Appendix F: Subject Information Sheet (Interview Participant)

University of Limerick

OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

Consent Form (Interviewee)

Date: 26/03/2012

Title of research study

A CASE STUDY OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF REGULAR TEACHERS OF A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO GUIDANCE COUNSELLING IN A MID WEST POST PRIMARY SCHOOL.

I have read the Subject Information letter and understand in detail the particulars of the research project. I understand that the identity of the teachers and the school will not be revealed at any stage in the reporting to the research study. The conditions involved in the research which are designed to protect the privacy of participants and respect their contributions are:

i. Participation is entirely voluntary

ii. Participants are free to withdraw at any time in the process and any contributions made will be subsequently destroyed.

iii. The interview will be kept strictly confidential and will be available only to the researcher and the research supervisor. Excerpts from the interview may be made part of the final research dissertation, but under no circumstances will names or any identifying characteristics be included.

I hereby agree to take part in James Galvin’s research study.

Signature: _______________________

Printed Name: _____________________

Date: ____________________________
Title of research study

A CASE STUDY OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF REGULAR TEACHERS OF A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO GUIDANCE COUNSELLING IN A MID WEST POST PRIMARY SCHOOL.

Dear Colleague,

I am currently undertaking an M.A. in Guidance and Counselling with the Department of Education and Professional Studies, University of Limerick. As part of my studies I must complete a research project on a topic of interest to me and related to guidance counselling under the supervision of Dr. Lucy Hearne.

In my research I will examine the perceptions of regular teachers on a whole school approach to guidance counselling in a post primary school. In order to gather this information and provide insights on the topic I would appreciate if you would agree to participate in a one hour interview on the topic.

All information gathered will be held in the strictest of confidence and pseudonyms will be used. Interviews will be recorded and the data will be securely held according to UL guidelines. Participation in the study is voluntary and participants can withdraw from the research at any time. The results from this research study will be reported in my thesis and may be disseminated through professional publication.
The collected data will be stored in a secure location approved by the University of Limerick. It is important to note that the school’s name and individual participants will not be used in the research and the school will not be identifiable to anyone other than those directly involved. Please note that the University is subject to the Freedom of Information Act and research procedures will adhere to the provision of the Data Protection Legislation.

If you have any queries or require further information on the research study, please contact me or my Supervisor:

Student Name: James Galvin                     Supervisor: Dr. Lucy Hearne
Tel. No.       086 8981764                        Tel. No.          061 202 91
Email:         jgalvin@cco.ie                     Email:           lucy.hearne@ul.ie

If you have any concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent source, you may contact:

Chairman Education and Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee
EHS Faculty Office
University of Limerick
Tel (062) 234101
Email: ehrsresearchethics@ul.ie

Yours sincerely,

James Galvin
Appendix H: Interview Schedule

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE
Length of interview 1 hour

1. Education and teacher role
   a. What were your reasons for entering the teaching profession?
   b. Can you describe the elements of your teacher training which focused on providing personal, social and emotional support?
   c. What do you think is the role of the teacher in caring for the best interests of the students?

2. Pastoral Support and Guidance Counselling
   a. Holistic development of post primary students is a key phrase used in the educational field. Can you describe your understanding of this term?
   b. What role do you think teachers should play in providing pastoral support to a student?
   c. What do you see is your specific role in providing pastoral care?
   d. What perceptions do you have in relation to what is working or not working?
   e. What impressions do you have about the initial training you received in respect to providing pastoral support to students?
   f. Are there any requirements that you feel would aid you in providing pastoral support?
   g. Since qualifying can you discuss any training or in-service you may have received in this area?
3. Organisation and Whole school approach to Guidance Counselling.
   
a. What type of guidance counselling support is effective in the school?
   
b. What do you understanding of the term “whole school approach to guidance counselling”?
   
c. What roles do you think regular teachers should play in providing a whole school approach to counselling guidance?
   
d. What would you see as your main duties in participating in a whole school approach to guidance counselling?

4. Budget 2012 influences
   
a. What is your understanding of the change in the provision of guidance counselling in the Budget 2012?
   
b. What affect do you think that this change will have on how students source guidance support within your school?
   
c. How do you think that this will affect your role in working with students?
Appendix I: Box 9.5 Key Questions in Considering Sensitive Educational Research

BOX 9.5 KEY QUESTIONS IN CONSIDERING SENSITIVE EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

- What renders the research sensitive?
- What are the obligations of the researcher, to whom, and how will these be addressed? How do these obligations manifest themselves?
- What is the likely effect of this research (at all stages) to be on participants (individuals and groups), stakeholders, the researcher, the community? Who will be affected by the research and how?
- Who is being discussed and addressed in the research?
- What are the rights if reply and control do participants have in the research?
- What are the ethical issues that are rendered more acute in the research?
- Over what matters in the planning, focus, conduct, sampling, instrumentation, methodology, reliability, analysis, reporting and dissemination might the researcher have to compromise in order to affect the research? On what can there be compromise? On what can there be no compromise?
- What securities, protections (and from what), liabilities and indemnifications are there in the research, and for whom? How can these be addressed?
- Who is the research for? Who are the beneficiaries for the research? Who are the winners and the losers in the research (and about what issues)?
- What are the risks and benefits of the research, and for whom? What will the research ‘deliver’ and do?
- Should the researcher declare his/her own values, and challenge those with which he/she disagrees or considers to be abhorrent?
- What might be the consequences, repercussions and backlash from the research, and for whom?
- What sanctions might there be in connection with the research?
- What has to be secured in a contractual agreement, and what is deliberately left out?
- What procedures for monitoring and accountability must there be in the research?
- What must and must not, should and should not, may and may not, could and could not be disclosed in the research?
- Should participants be identifiable and identified? What if identification is unavoidable?
- How will access and sampling be secured and secure respectively?
- How will access be sustained over time?
- Who are the gatekeepers and how reliable are they?

Appendix J: Results from online SurveyMonkey

Q1: What is your gender?

Chart 4.0 Gender of participants

Q2: How many years have you worked in education?

Chart 4.1 – Number of years working in education
Q3: What programmes do you teach in your school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programmes</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Junior Certificate (JC)</td>
<td>93.3%</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaving Certificate (LC)</td>
<td>96.7%</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior Certificate Schools Programme (JSCP)</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA)</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP)</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Social and Political Education (CSPE)</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Year</td>
<td>73.3%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Leaving Certificate (PLC)</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1 – Programmes that each teacher delivers in the school

Q 4: Do you provide any extracurricular activities?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you provide any extracurricular activities?</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>58.6%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If yes, please detail the extracurricular activity</td>
<td>skipped question</td>
<td>answered question 29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Athletics
Basketball
Musical, Hurling, Yearbook
Sport and competitions
Gaelic Football, science competitions, traditional Irish music
Spanish trips and exchanges
Hurling
quiz, debate
Music Lessons, Musical
Sport
Soccer
Mini Company for TY students
Rowing
Rugby, basketball, Soccer, Football, Hurling, Rowing
Media Club
Basketball
Hurling

116
Q 5: What does educating students mean to you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educating students is so important to me as it gives me a sense of achievement and makes me feel proud to see students succeeding in my subject.</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>“Being a facilitator not dictator” &amp; providing a valuable learning experience for all students not only for the years spent in school but for later life also &amp; in the process Also nourishing social skills</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Due to examination requirements, educating students in these times generally involves preparation for the state examinations. I would like to think that educating students involves helping them develop their knowledge of relevant and tangible information and ability to express them in a manner that will have lifelong benefits for them.</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Covering the syllabus / developing them holistically and preparing them for life</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>That we get a chance to mould the next generation and help them to be more successful than the last generation</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Worthwhile and rewarding career</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>making them aware of the importance of taking a critical approach to the subject matter and making sense of a plurality of choices</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>that students learn about the subject and show and develop an interest and liking of the subject</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>To have a positive influence on their academic growth and development.</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Helping students reach their potential in a nurturing and caring environment.</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>broadening their horizons and making them better all round people</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>to improve their understanding of what it means to have a good and happy life</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preparing them for the future and providing them with the necessary skills to succeed professionally and personally</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Helping Students to achieve their potential This includes success in exams, but also means trying to in still a spirit of enquiry and a love of learning. It also involves seeing the student as a person, and realising that school is only one part of their lives.</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledge of the subject and being able to relate things to real life</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enabling students to be successful after school</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Not just imparting knowledge of the subject but whole development of the child</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>To try and inspire an interest and appreciation of my subject. To help equip students with the skills they will need when they enter 3rd Level/work. To give guidance, pastoral care and support.</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>It gives me a chance to make an impression, for the better, on students lives and help them achieve their goals in life</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Helping them to achieve to their potential in my subjects and as a person</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Providing a student with lifelong knowledge in areas that can support them to be an important part of the community.</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Providing a gateway to a positive constructive and secure future</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Whole student development happy and education to the best of their ability.</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A chance to make a difference to young people.</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Like helping students</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>To the skills to acquire critical knowledge</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I believe that educating students is using different methodologies to teach curriculum in an integrative holistic approach</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q6: Please state some of the crucial factors that affect the success of students?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please state some of the crucial factors that affect the success of students?</th>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Answered question</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Skipped question</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Literacy can be seen as being crucial to a student’s academic achievement.
2. organisation of the teacher, if teacher is organised, students will be organised-Understanding & comprehending Support both at home & at school- pastoral care-Providing a safe working environment for students
3. Confidence, engaging students’ interest in a subject area, communicative teaching style, approachable teaching manner
4. Home life-Personal Motivation -Peer pressure-Quality of teacher
5. P
6. Are they hungry-Are they happy-Do they feel confident with the teachers ability to teach the content
7. Motivation of students and teachers. Home support. Qualities of the teacher to plan, organise, reflect
8. their own expectations; their family background; their own aspirations; school and class environment; good class management; inspirational teachers
9. The teacher, the environment, where the class is held, other students in the classroom... but mainly interest in the teaching of the subject and the learning, how the students’ interest is kept, motivation, different use of resources
10. Good communication, being always available to help, patience, hard work
11. Positive learning environment-Clear and comprehensive teaching instructions-Good friendships-Extracurricular options
12. attendance, attitude, support from home
13. poverty, parents, environment, peers
14. Lack of ambition, care-free attitude, lack of knowledge with regard to the importance of education and respect for others-
15. A supportive family background that values education-Sufficient means to fund the expense of education-Good friends-Good teachers-teachers
16. Work, Attention
17. Socioeconomic background, Psychological profile
18. Background, support/pressure at home, ability, friends, teachers, discipline
20. School environment, classroom environment, home environment
21. Motivation-Self discipline-Parental/family support-Expectation-Teacher input
22. Family situation, unemployment in the home, separation between parents, relationships with peers.
23. Home issues-bullying-personal issues-relationships-lack of positive comments from school & home
24. parental involvement, staff commitment, an interest in learning
25. Family circumstances
27. Interest in the subjects matter, relationship with the teacher and peers and teaching methods
Q7: What do you understand by the term pastoral support to students?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>answered question</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skipped question</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 1 | It relates to providing care and support for students. |
| 2 | caring for students, helping students cope with life, that students feel safe in your care, most importantly teaching students life skills |
| 3 | This to me suggests students' confidence in approaching a teacher/relevant staff member in relation to issues not directly connected to teaching/learning |
| 4 | Supporting kids with issues inside and outside school experience. |
| 5 | To support students |
| 6 | Students welfare is prime importance |
| 7 | being aware of their problems and needs and willing to listen in a safe and supportive environment |
| 8 | being a teacher but being there for the students when they need you |
| 9 | to provide help to students outside of the classroom teaching maybe regarding advice on an issue or bullying etc... |
| 10 | dealing with non-educational problems students may have |
| 11 | helping students as people |
| 12 | Support for pupils in any crisis and in general. |
| 13 | It means accepting the student as he/she is and helping the student to achieve the best possible education, often in spite of the difficulties they are experiencing |
| 14 | Caring for more than just education |
| 15 | help and support to students, listening and encouraging students |
| 16 | To support the general well-being of students. Focusing more on their emotional/social state rather than academic achievement. |
| 17 | A whole life approach, taking care of all aspects of their lives, not just academic |
| 18 | Being a surrogate parent for a few hours, allowing students to talk to you and using what they tell you responsibly. |
| 19 | Pupils needs outside of learning |
| 20 | Support that ensures a positive development of the student as a person |
| 21 | Yes |
| 22 | Support for personal problems, family issues and school related issues |
| 23 | An understanding of where students come from outside of school and how this may affect their education. |
| 24 | Support not related to a specific subject. Examples may be: emotional, personal, career guidance, general help. |
| 25 | I believe pastoral care is showing a caring side to students. |
Q8: Whose role do you think it is to provide pastoral support to students in your post-primary school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whose role do you think it is to provide pastoral support to students in your post primary school?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Answer Options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>answered question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skipped question</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number | Response Date | Other (please specify) | Categories |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Apr 19, 2012 4:47 PM</td>
<td>Also for the home school liaison worker to help.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mar 28, 2012 8:13 PM</td>
<td>I think Pastoral support is a whole school responsibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mar 28, 2012 10:31 AM</td>
<td>Whole school responsibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mar 28, 2012 8:27 AM</td>
<td>All of the above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chart 4.2 – The members of staff that regular teachers think should provide a pastoral support role
Q9: Have you held or do you hold a position on a pastoral care team?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes 44.4%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No 55.6%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 27
skipped question 3

1. Member of the PSB team, not currently though
2. anti bullying
3. I am a member of a Student Support team
4. 3rd year assistant dean
5. In this and previous schools I have been an assistant Head.
6. I have been a Class tutor and I am now an assistant year head, I am also a member of a number of teams within the school like the personal safety board and student support team
7. SST member
8. PSB board
9. I help out on the PSB board.

Chart 4.2.1 – Amount of regular teachers that offer pastoral care
Q10: If yes to question 9 what year group contains the students that you most regularly offer pastoral care to?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Years</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Years</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Years</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Years</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th Years</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th Years</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I currently feel I do not offer pastoral support as a teacher.</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>answered question</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skipped question</td>
<td></td>
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Chart 4.3 – The year group that the regular teachers mostly offer pastoral care to
Question 11: What role do you think a teacher should play in providing pastoral support to students?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
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<tr>
<td>What role do you think a teacher should play in providing pastoral support to students?</td>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>Count</strong></td>
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<td>answered question</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skipped question</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. At the beginning of the year explain to students your other roles apart from teaching, that you are approachable if they need you. Also positively interacting with students is imperative and being 'fair' to all understanding & listening and being non-judgemental.

2. A teacher that the students feel both comfortable in talking to as well as reassuring students that they will take the appropriate measures necessary to assist them.

3. Noticing any change in behaviour, if they are in difficulty support them as best you can.

4. A listening ear.

5. They are the first to see an issue. They should voice their concern to year head and then guidance councillor.

6. A supportive role.

7. A person the student can rely on if they have any worries.

8. To always listen to the students needs and to always try to assist in some way.

9. Listen, reassure, point them in the right direction where more help may be available every day should see issues.

10. A teacher should always be available to provide support for students.

11. A teacher should always be aware of students’ needs but should be sensitive about giving/offering support. Often, the most important thing to do is to pass on concerns to Guidance counsellor/SST.

12. Act as a person to talk to.

13. To always refer issues of concern to the pastoral support team in the school.

14. Promoting and safeguarding the health, welfare and safety of young people. Working in partnership with parents, support staff and other professionals. Providing advice and guidance to young people on issues relating to their education. Contributing towards good order and the wider needs of the school.

15. The teacher should be a person that the students feel comfortable in approaching if they have problems.

16. Come to know the students. Provide care and support for each student during their time in school. Be aware of the particular needs, interests and aspirations of each individual student. Assist with any problems students may encounter. Act as an advocate for each student as required. Develop and maintain a sense of community in the class group.

17. Helping to provide structured and disciplined sanctuary for them in school.

18. Teachers should always play a key role in this responsibility.

19. Listen understand support and help.

20. Listen to pupil.

21. Essential. Teacher is the first person students relate to and there should be a total availability of teachers.

22. I feel a teacher should be approachable and show a caring side.
Question 12: What do you understand is the role of the guidance counsellor?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>answered question</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skipped question</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 1 | To be there as a support for students outside of the classroom where he/she offers guidance in terms of subject choices, career choices, filling out CAO forms etc. In other words that the Guidance Counsellor is there to listen and advise students. |
| 2 | To help students in their 'journey' through school and communicate |
| 3 | To advise and assist students in their life long plans beyond their school years. Their role crucially involves dealing with personal and sensitive issues that may have been referred on to them by a colleague or government organisation dealing with child protection. |
| 4 | Someone for the students to talk to if there are issues at home/ school advising them on career choices and pathway. Giving them help and support |
| 5 | To be the overall facilitator of support |
| 6 | To talk to the student and help them in any way possible. They may have to contact home or even the authorities |
| 7 | To be there and available when the students need them |
| 8 | To guide the student in the right path, help with their problems and understand them not as a teacher but as a professional and give them the right support and advice |
| 9 | To provide career guidance to students such as advice for college places, but also provide a counselling service for students if they have any social problems or problems at home. |
| 10 | As above plus helping students make subject and career choices |
| 11 | To be there for major emergencies and ongoing issues |
| 12 | The role of a guidance counsellor is to provide proper guidance for individuals. They guide students in the right direction be it professionally or personally. |
| 13 | The role of the guidance counsellor is to support the students, to offer counselling and to refer concerns to Principal and to liaise with outside authorities if necessary. They also offer advice on career options and information on further education/training. They help the students to navigate the difficulties of the CAO. |
| 14 | Person to talk to in difficult times or when faced with problems and difficult situations |
| 15 | To offer pastoral support to all students |
| 16 | To support the emotional welfare of students. To help each student become aware of their talents and abilities and how best to utilise these talents and abilities so as to optimise their engagement with education and to reach their optimum potential. To assist each student in the identification and exploration of various educational and career opportunities open to them in both second level and post second level. To enable students to grow in independence and to take responsibility for their own selves, their learning and their careers. To assist in the provision of information so that students may make informed decisions aware of possible consequences and implications. |
| 17 | To give students advice on dealing with problems they encounter in everyday life that they may not have the ability to deal with. Also to give advice on careers |
| 18 | To aid in educational and life choices. To help students with personal choices or issues during their school life. To assess students throughout their time in school |
| 19 | To support the students non learning needs & to liaise with external agencies |
| 20 | To guide and counsel the student with decision making and personal development |
| 21 | Listen support help |
| 22 | To help and guide pupils their educational choices as well as helping them with unrelated school issues |
| 23 | To provide educational, pastoral and career guidance to all students |
| 24 | Someone who co-ordinates pastoral care activities across the school. |
| 25 | Their main role is to offer students guidance around subjects and careers. Also, to help students going through a tough time. |
Q. 13: What do understand by the term guidance?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guidance is all about guiding people in the right direction. Giving support, being there to listen in times of need. Where the guidance teacher uses his/her knowledge to help someone. Example: Filling out CAO forms, making subject choices, career choices etc.</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>knowing there is help available, giving advice, providing options</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>offering a lead, possibly choices and informing the students as much as possible about personal and professional issues. Guidance also hints at the students taking an important degree of responsibility for choices they make</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To guide and explain to a student their options</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help student with any personal issue that they want to share, look out for the well being of the child and guide them towards options they can take after they leave school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to help guide the student in an increasingly permissive environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no idea</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>help and assistance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>information and advice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to lead towards the light</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing individuals with the correct information to send them in the right direction.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career/Further education advice and information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping to make better of situations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening, supporting and understanding the needs of the student body</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice or counselling, especially that provided for students choosing a course of study, preparing for a vocation or dealing with emotional difficulties.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To give advice in how to deal with something, to guide them through the issue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To help or facilitate with students choices be they educational or career driven.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careers guidance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing direction and supports for decision making</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To assist -to help-to steer in the right direction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To guide pupils in their subject and career choices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>information and advice regarding career choices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading students towards the right direction.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand the term guidance as helping students with their choice of careers and options.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 14: What do understand by the term counselling?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counselling is a service provided by someone who is qualified to counsel. It relates to helping someone who needs attention due to something difficult that has happened in their lives that they cannot deal with. A counselor talks and listens to people who have suffered in some way due to a death in the family, an attack that happened them, family issues, anger management problems etc.</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To listen, support, understand &amp; guide people how to resolve problems &amp; maybe teaching people about their emotions?</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offering students a secure, compassionate, reassuring and safe place and/or individual who will listen without judging and offer them steps to improve their situation</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>providing the students time explore and understand difficulties in your relationships / school life and home life</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be a listening ear when it is most needed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen to their problems, help them if possible and notify others in authority if necessary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>after reflecting with the student, to accompany them in their journey towards a possible resolution</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no idea</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>advice and support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dealing with personal problems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to help a grieving process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening and providing support and help.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support to students in personal difficulties by listening and helping them to deal with problems/questions in their lives. They can sometimes access practical support for students.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening and understanding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping students to deal positively with events in their lives and for the future</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice, opinion or instruction given in directing the judgment or conduct of another.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to allow a person/student to confide their problems and give help in dealing with them</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To help students adapt to life in post-primary or in the case of a life changing experiences help them to adapt to that life and help them make any transitions be it from primary to post primary, junior cycle to senior or to college. To help them understand changes in their lives like parental separation or bereavement.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone they can offload to &amp; seek advice from</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to guide and support individuals who might be struggling with personal direction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening-understanding-be there.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening and supporting pupils. Helping students to help themselves.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a support for students to help them cope with the challenges of adolescence and its impact on their development and education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselling is speaking with students and helping them through their problems.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 15: When do you think a student requires counselling support in school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Answered question</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skipped question</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. As mentioned above.
2. Upset, overwhelmed, stressed, unable to cope, difficult family situations, traumatic & tragic circumstances.
3. Personal trauma, bereavement, stress, family breakdown, financial difficulties to name a few.
4. Home issues - School issues - Bereavement - Abuse issues - Bullying.
5. When they are feeling down, lonely or upset.
6. Personal issues, bullying, if a teacher is aware of abuse, change in behaviour which could cause concern.
7. When they feel pressurised and over-whelmed by family and school, feeling depressed, isolated, marginalised, bullied.
8. Whenever they need it.
9. At all times, so that they have comfort knowing that support is always available at anytime.
11. Suicidal, major issues.
12. There are many reasons but it is not necessarily always negative. A student may be upset or worried or may just need somebody to listen.
13. When they have problems in their lives that they feel unable to cope with on their own.
15. All students whether they be potentially at risk or simply need to speak to someone.
16. There will be times of greater need for students throughout their school life (option choices, periods of emotional distress, 3rd Level applications), but, ideally, a student should meet briefly with a counsellor on a monthly basis.
17. It varies.
18. After a serious incident at home or school, sudden bereavement, personal issues.
19. When external factors of their lives affect their school work and general well being.
20. Throughout the entirety of the school life.
21. When they feel they need help or support, when the school feel support must be offered.
22. At any stage in their education.
23. Whenever they require it or teachers think that a student require.
24. I think a student requires counselling when they are being bullied, times of upset and around personal issues.
Question 16: What does the term whole school approach to guidance counselling mean to you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>answered question</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skipped question</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Everyone agreeing to the same decisions made about guidance counselling. All agreeing to rules and regulations documented. Everyone supporting students and having the same outlook when it comes to guidance. Being there to support the guidance counsellor in his/her decisions and advise given to us teachers.

2. Evaluating, implementing, leaders?? all staff getting involved

3. This involves a structure, possibly a hierarchy, in which a specific system is in place to assist the child in their difficulty.

4. Everyone in the school could be involved in guidance counselling not just the guidance counsellor

5. That everybody works under the one banner to support both each other and the student groups

6. All teachers have a role to play in guidance in the school

7. to involve the entire staff in a collective approach to provide a supportive environment for the student

8. that everybody should be available to help if needed

9. to look at the larger picture of counselling, that all teachers are to assist in some way like the guidance counsellor

10. senior management, guidance counsellors, deans, HSL, selection of teachers

11. everyone gets involved. The way it should be.

12. That it is a holistic approach. The whole staff body must be aware.

13. Everyone in the school is aware of the work of the guidance department and understands when it is appropriate to access their help for students. However, each staff member has a responsibility to treat students as individuals and not to limit their interaction to teaching their subject

14. Everybody is involved

15. All members of the teaching staff must have a role in the development of students

16. That each member of the school staff is part of the guidance procedure - not just those whose job title is 'Guidance Counsellor'.

17. that it is the responsibility of every member of staff to take an interest in the well-being of students and help students deal with problems and where necessary refer the student to a more experienced member of staff

18. Involving each member of staff not just the guidance team. Helping staff to help students effectively without the need of the guidance teams intervention.

19. WE must all be on the lookout for "signals" of students in possible distress

20. Every member of staff must be involved in or aware of the counselling structures within the school community


22. That all teachers deal with pupils issues

23. when every teacher plays a part in providing advice, information and support to students education


25. I think the term means having all staff involved in offering support to students.
Section 9 (C) of the education act 1998 refers to the delivery of appropriate guidance as being “a whole school responsibility”. Appropriate guidance as the supporting of the “moral, spiritual, social and personal developments of students” In relation to 9(C) please indicate how you feel about this:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tend to agree</td>
<td>28.0%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither agree or disagree</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tend to agree</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Skipped question</td>
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</table>

Section 9 (C) of the education act 1998 refers to the delivery of appropriate guidance as being “a whole school responsibility”. Appropriate guidance as the supporting of the “moral, spiritual, social and personal developments of students” In relation to 9(C) please indicate how you feel about this:

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<tr>
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<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>56.0%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tend to agree</td>
<td>28.0%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither agree or disagree</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tend to agree</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
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<td>25</td>
</tr>
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Chart 4.4 – Perception of Section 9 (C) of the Education Act (1998)
Question 18: What do you feel should be the role of the Department of Education and Skills in supporting teachers in the provision of a whole school approach to guidance counselling?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>skipped question</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Providing more knowledge to teachers, more training should be available in-services
2. Regular sessions, perhaps as a fundamental part to the Croke Park agreement, informing, updating and guiding teachers on improved recommendations of a whole school approach
3. Provision of qualified teachers / counsellors to deal with student issues. Provide time / opportunity in school timetable. Include it in the syllabi
4. I'm unsure as I have not enough information on it but if you fill me in on this area in the interview I'll help you out then
5. Training for all teachers
6. Providing training
7. They should educate teachers better in this aspect so we are all ready to help if needed
8. Hands on help, to come into the school and show us
9. Training/seminars to help deal with issues
10. It should be expected of any teacher. The children are not just a number
11. More information and training on the topic.
12. They should provide the financial resources necessary.
13. More training of teachers
14. Proper in-service, training and up skilling of teachers in relation to pastoral issues
15. To provide resources, training and funding to make each teacher aware of their responsibilities with regard to this area and to equip them with the skills to be effective.
16. Training should be supplied to help teachers learn how to deal with any issues, how to recognise them and how to approach students if we feel they have problems.
17. There should be resources and teams sent to each school to access the level of guidance counselling offered in each school. Teachers should be helped in delivering effective guidance to students outside of the guidance teams.
18. Increasing hours instead of cutting them
19. The necessary resources and time allocation should be put in place
20. In-service and training in dealing with those at risk
21. Teachers would require appropriate training. I feel some issues are too delicate for a whole school approach.
23. Support should be provided prior as far as guidance counselling is concerned.
24. I feel the department should offer more training and support for teachers

I would be willing to participate in an interview on the topic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>58.3%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No thanks</td>
<td>45.8%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If yes, please fill in your name below</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>answered question</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skipped question</td>
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</table>
### Appendix K: Extracts from Interview Transcripts.

#### A: Extract from Anthony’s interview transcript

| A 1 | “To be honest with you within my own degree I actually felt that it was quite lacking. In relation to the science aspect that was to help me teach science. But the education modules I feel that it was very lacking in the emotional support. Until you actually get into the profession you are not really ware of the number of issues that are in schools. I see it so many days here so many aspects of everyday life. Problems students are doing through. Problems that families are going through. I was not aware of any of this when I was in college.” |
| A 2 | “Back in your teaching practice I personally felt one too young and too short. You are thrown into a situation where you are 18 years of age, 19 year of age thrown into a school situation where by you could be teaching students 2 or 3 years younger than you.” |
| A 3 | “I feel that I am a person that is approachable. Who would listen and would do their best to help or get involved but I would not feel comfortable to be giving out a professional opinion.” |
| A 4 | At the same time you really pretty much have to take on the role, a parental role as a sense. |
| A 5 | To keep looking out for those not to ignore them. An extreme high can be as dangerous as an extreme low |
| A 6 | Maybe a quiet word inside in the car not to take them out of the environment and highlight any issue. Just a gentle are you okay and like let them come to you and let them know that they can approach you at the end of the day. |
| A 7 | “I think I am a person that is approachable. Who would listen and would do their best to help or get involved but I would not feel comfortable to be giving out a professional opinion.” |
| A 8 | “To be honest with you within my own degree I actually felt that it was quite lacking. In relation to the science aspect that was to help me teach science. But the education modules I feel that it was very lacking in the emotional support. Until you actually get into the profession you are not really ware of the number of issues that are in schools. I see it so many days here so many aspects of everyday life. Problems students are doing through. Problems that families are going through. I was not aware of any of this when I was in college.” |
| A 9 | “Back in your teaching practice I personally felt one too young and too short. You are thrown into a situation where you are 18 years of age, 19 year of age thrown into a school situation where by you could be teaching students 2 or 3 years younger than you.” |
| A 10 | “I think I am a person that is approachable. Who would listen and would do their best to help or get involved but I would not feel comfortable to be giving out a professional opinion.” |
| A 11 | “To be honest with you within my own degree I actually felt that it was quite lacking. In relation to the science aspect that was to help me teach science. But the education modules I feel that it was very lacking in the emotional support. Until you actually get into the profession you are not really ware of the number of issues that are in schools. I see it so many days here so many aspects of everyday life. Problems students are doing through. Problems that families are going through. I was not aware of any of this when I was in college.” |
| A 12 | “Back in your teaching practice I personally felt one too young and too short. You are thrown into a situation where you are 18 years of age, 19 year of age thrown into a school situation where by you could be teaching students 2 or 3 years younger than you.” |
| A 13 | “I feel that I am a person that is approachable. Who would listen and would do their best to help or get involved but I would not feel comfortable to be giving out a professional opinion.” |
| A 14 | “To be honest with you within my own degree I actually felt that it was quite lacking. In relation to the science aspect that was to help me teach science. But the education modules I feel that it was very lacking in the emotional support. Until you actually get into the profession you are not really ware of the number of issues that are in schools. I see it so many days here so many aspects of everyday life. Problems students are doing through. Problems that families are going through. I was not aware of any of this when I was in college.” |
| A 15 | “Back in your teaching practice I personally felt one too young and too short. You are thrown into a situation where you are 18 years of age, 19 year of age thrown into a school situation where by you could be teaching students 2 or 3 years younger than you.” |
| A 16 | “I feel that I am a person that is approachable. Who would listen and would do their best to help or get involved but I would not feel comfortable to be giving out a professional opinion.” |
| A 17 | “To be honest with you within my own degree I actually felt that it was quite lacking. In relation to the science aspect that was to help me teach science. But the education modules I feel that it was very lacking in the emotional support. Until you actually get into the profession you are not really ware of the number of issues that are in schools. I see it so many days here so many aspects of everyday life. Problems students are doing through. Problems that families are going through. I was not aware of any of this when I was in college.” |
| A 18 | “Back in your teaching practice I personally felt one too young and too short. You are thrown into a situation where you are 18 years of age, 19 year of age thrown into a school situation where by you could be teaching students 2 or 3 years younger than you.” |
| A 19 | “I feel that I am a person that is approachable. Who would listen and would do their best to help or get involved but I would not feel comfortable to be giving out a professional opinion.” |
Educating but not doing the holistic side of things. So, I think that is one thing that is not working in some schools across the board.

Again the counselling team in school are working extremely well. Very efficient but I don’t think that there is not enough of them. I don’t think that they have enough time.

Am... Firstly at the moment all I could think of would be the most professional people that I would go to would be the guidance counselling team. Am... Is there was some kind of seminar given. Am... Basically again reiterating teachers their role in terms of pastoral care and maybe giving teachers.

Where I definitely think if the guidance team are giving it. They are sitting there going well they are trained in this whereas I would definitely think it if there was a teacher that I would think comfortable with and I was aware of situations that they dealt with very well then I would be very happy having them talk to me.

Yeah I definitely would feel that you know if you went to approach the guidance team you might feel that they are just going to take it of you. You might feel if I go in now and say that they will just deal with it. And that is maybe not what you want in the first place. Maybe you did want to do it yourself.

I would feel that instead going to the guidance team that they would feel pressurised and kind of saying look I will deal with it.

Nothing is blown under the carpet or anything like that.

So in terms of whole school approach to guidance counselling I suppose definitely having all of the teachers. Again going back to the whole pastoral care thing having all teachers involved on a daily basis not just dealing with issues but guiding students putting them in the right direction in terms of options for subjects in terms of what aspects of life in terms of sporting extracurricular is not just again education.

In terms of science Junior Cert science particularly the curriculum has changed now they have introduced and awful lot of STS linking social aspects in every topic. Linking every topic now that you do in science to something that happens socially so in terms of I suppose if you take the biology chapters to get to the point.

Sexual diseases alcohol, speeding all those. We talk a bit about it in Junior Cert but then in Leaving Cert we kind of focus on this is your 600 points that you need to get to go college here are the options that you should be doing I find that there is not enough of basic life training really for students. I find years ago you weren’t taught it because there really was no real access to it now students have to deal with as youngster as 14, 15 with people offering them drugs. People driving cars at 17 years of age. We didn’t have cars when we were that age. Then you have speeding even under the influence of drugs while driving. You know different aspects like that. Really lacking in leaving cert cycle.

They don’t give them the full story because a lot of it has to be held back but I think that they are very aware that there is something there. In other school you might find that guidance team holds onto the whole information and you know teachers then are told nothing.

I think by it all being kept hush hush a lot of information being kept from them. They kind of feel that because I am not entitled to the information I really am not entitled to take responsibility I think that if the information was given to them that teachers will take responsibility for it.

Again not everyone gets into the role of guidance counselling because they just don’t have the type of personality so I think that if every teacher was told their role was expanding that way I would feel that a lot of them would struggle. I would feel that a lot of them would struggle with the information get and some people might panic or find it overwhelming to hear something from the student.

They have never had to deal with a student in floods of tears. That you know that it is amazing that in a full year or even two years that their career can go by and they never actually experience any of this. Am... That I think at an early stage teachers need to be informed what is actually happening on the ground. A lot of them don’t realise what students are going through or what family issues there are and you tell them and they are horrified.

It would have to be across the country yes wouldn’t it be ideal wouldn’t it be great if our school were trained in it but that is only our school that would be trained for our kids. Across the board there are 55,000 students around the place whatever that they all need to be dealt with so it does have to come down from the government departments etc. The resources has to be provided the time needs to be provided we can’t just keep this in a little closed shop of let’s do it in our own school.

I feel myself that a lot of the issues that are being dealt with by the guidance team could be dealt with by the teachers themselves................. And that is going to have a serious knock on for the kids.

They can walk in and they can feel that they are there throughout the day I can go from them. You take that away and now that child is left completely alone. They now then the worry of to source someone else or the worry of never sourcing anyone else again not expressing anything in school. Basically if there is an issue at home they will feel that when they come to school that they can’t talk about that anymore because there support is gone and a lot of them have.............. And now they have to go off and find a new support and or they never find a support and they go through the next three four years in school without expressing all that emotion that they are building up in side of them. A lot more serious things can happen.

situation by a student who has been very open with the guidance team now becomes a closed book you are dealing with a bomb ready to go off and if they are not willing to open up to you then you’re working conditions can be where they could go through extremes of moods in class.............. So I would find my role getting a lot more stressful who are unwilling to open up to. Am and then again not having that support from the guidance team.
### B: Extract of Bill’s interview transcript.

| B1 | I always wanted to be a teacher. I always loved school. I loved that interaction with the teachers and the students. I had kind of an exciting childhood so school was a safety zone in a sense. |
| B2 | Some of my friends would have had a parent that died. You know would have been in situations and I was the person that they came along and chatted to. I was going through similar things myself. I guess looking back now I would not have dealt with that to them. I was the listener rather than the talker. |
| B3 | They had a very strong ethos inside there. The pastoral side was very positive and forward. Am. That really came across in the school there. The atmosphere of the teachers, students. |
| B4 | Well I guess the role of the teacher for caring for the students is you are in a sense loco parentis you are their mother, their father, their brother and their sister. Am. You had to bring good news and bad news to them and you have to keep an eye on them. |
| B5 | In a genuine manner they will respond to it. Or their friends will tell them that you know. You might not be able to help them but you will be able to pass on or ensure that they seek help from someplace else. |
| B6 | You will get the best out of them. They might not work for the other teacher but they will work for you. |
| B7 | Probably the rounded student may be. You know the holistic approach catering for all the elements of the student. You know. The mental well being of the individual. It is just not the academic side of it. It is is the social skills. It is the behavioural skills. It is coping with stress. Coping with issues at home and school you know. |
| B8 | The schools that focus on the academic side completely. The students will suffer in the long run. The child was struggling like mad and was depressed and couldn’t sleep and was really down bailing crying. So she went in and they were only talking about her grades and her points. They did not even see the other side of her so she came back to us. |
| B9 | The first thing is, you know Training and understanding is very important for a teacher. While a teacher could want to do well they could end up doing more harm. |
| B10 | They see like their parent in many ways. They may look up to you; they may love your subject. They may even like your personality you know. And you have to build up a relationship with them which is very important not only academically but also for them. |
| B11 | ............ the pastoral care of the teacher has a clear understanding of what has actually happened and what their role is and the different levels that it takes it. |
| B12 | I would view the pastoral side as maybe more important than the academic side. |
| B13 | I would probably call the student out you know as I say we could go for a walk around the block and have a chat not necessarily a noisy element of it tell me everything. Just in a sense about how are things, how are you getting on? I have a feeling that there is something wrong. The word is out that you are not the best. What is the story? |
| B14 | I would probably say that I would know for example that before Christmas there a student came to me about an issue and they would not have come to me about the issue if it was not for the fact that I had been involved in a previous issue with a friend of theirs. I was just sitting and listening. I was not going to be judgemental. |
| B15 | Well we are in a big school and a lot of numbers and kids can become numbers. It is important that you always know the names of the students and you can build a relationship up. |
| B16 | And maybe on a Monday period 2 I might end up giving out to the class but they know that in period 4 that when they bump into me that they can have a chat with me and that I won’t hold a grudge. |
| B17 | And because the school is so big the person that makes the most noise gets the most attention. Sometimes that student that is very quiet you know. So those kinds of kids get lost in a big school. And then you have teachers that might not teach a student that might come across something but might not see it or know that type of student. |
| B18 | Then of course there is the issue of referring things up, and things getting lost. You know not stepping on other people’s toes you know. That they won’t be brushed away and told that they are over reacting. |
| B19 | That that information could not be told to her. But she reflected on her relationship with the students that she was very stand offish with them. That her guard is always on and especially as they get older that guard. |
| B20 | They should be in a relationship that they should be more relaxed that you know as I would say what can happen I don’t need to be on my guard the whole time that they know that I can come in and everyone knows what to do and you know if you have to pull someone up. Her guard was up the whole time. That prevented a pastoral element to getting in. |
| B21 | I would usually say let’s go have a walk or find a room in an environment that we are both comfortable with and you know it can turn into a really serious session that does not matter. |
| B22 | It is but I had an awful time when I was in secondary school at home and everything else and not one teacher came up to me. And as I said to you sometimes it is the quiet student might not be able to converse with it or may need someone to say you look off form how is things and then they might be able to you know. So I think that there is some training that has to be done I say that it is to ensure that that actually happens. |
| B23 | So if you can train and guide a teacher into the signs of what to do and how to deal with it and then whenever a bigger issue then when it was a small issue that could have been dealt with and they will remember that time that you took an interest in them. |
You won’t forget it. So then you know you are never in a situation that where a student is in a suicidal situation and they’re there because no one has listened to them.

Talking it out may not have worked but again that is a different step but at least that you were there you know what I mean. (J: Someone to listen.) Yeah! Especially for fellas. You know what I mean. A girl will nearly always come up and talk to you about something’s but fellas rarely do. I had a fella this year that balled and cried in front of me down below. He had an issue a personal issue with himself and he balled cried……………………. With fellas you have to go digging you know. If I ask one question and then I ask a second question then you know he would have walked out and I would not have known. I knew that there was something you know and with fellas you have to dig a bit and then it will implode and then……

You get it at a low level so it doesn’t reach a high level.

At least they know you are available they might not talk to you about it but they might talk to you in 6 months time or a month’s time and to me that is important.

I do think that we do have a good pastoral side in the school. To be honest it could be better am………… we have a good system for dealing with bullying for example, we have good school completion and we have good home school liaison which marry very well together am I do think that an awful lot is pushed on the guidance and deal with everything. Or the year heads to deal with everything and that is my point is that maybe you know a teacher learning with how to deal with a situation in a pastoral manner that can be part of the process and that can feed it and that I feel would be very good.

I do think that we do have a good system but like any system it has to have constant training, constant renewing, and constant re-evaluation.

Teachers always have a fear of discipline discipline and I would know some guidance counsellors who would say that you can’t have discipline and guidance. That as a teacher you can’t. That there is a question mark over being a disciplinarian and I wouldn’t agree. I have often screamed the face of and killed individuals and then in 10 mins I am talking to them about a guidance thing.

You can’t be over discipline and at times you have to step back. I say that it is down to experiences now that I have learned to think before I shoot in a sense and start questioning.

You know that pastoral care and guidance is just not for the guidance counsellor but for the pastoral care team. But even having a pastoral care team is the wrong thing because every teacher is on the pastoral care team.

I think that people might think that is his job not my job. I think that is important that whatever way they want it is that they are in loco parentis.

……………………that they are worried about you have to go and have a chat and bring it to a certain level where you can say to yourself that I feel that I have done the best that I can do here and maybe this is an issue that has to go to the guidance counsellor.

So I think that every person in the school. Every person. (J: All staff) All staff. And that is the point that I am making. You are either on the pastoral team, or the guidance team and suddenly it is not you responsibility. At the end of the day you are the class teacher. I don’t teach Johnny so it is not really my problem. That really is not good enough.

Talk about options and leaving cert courses and some people would always view that is what they do. They sit in the office and having a cup of tea and Johnny comes and he says do arts in UCC and away you go………… My view of the world guidance in guidance counselling is a combination of both the looking after the student. What I mean by looking after the student in their welfare, their wellbeing and their education.

I would always have told my 6th years if you want to do something in life go talk to the people and do it. If you want to know about education then go talk to the teachers. I think that there is a sense that sometimes that I had a situation there a fella wanted to do computers, computer programmer. I told him that a friend of mine was a computer programmer…………………… So I think that the experiences of a teacher are very important for guiding students into their career path.

J: In relation to whole school approach to guidance counselling what would you see as your main duties as in your day to day duties in supporting a whole school approach? B: I would say dealing with the minut details very small things. Looking out for various kids. You know the daily interactions. Even there I like to do it at break times is walking around and talking to the kids and interacting with the kids. And you can see who is hanging around with whom.

I teach History so I would probably say yes. You are dealing with people, issues and personalities. Consequences of events and stuff like that. You could. We do social History, you know what I mean.

A negative view that I am just getting paid and this isn’t what I was trained to do and to be fair to them are correct and if they had the training they could not have the argument anymore. So that is something. I think the older generation of a teacher would feel very nervous and even the younger ones honestly.

My wife is from the Waltons and she wouldn’t think of various things that I would think of. She wouldn’t see the things that I see like and her line would be I am a teacher first I have had no training in this situation I don’t know what to do.

We always probably had it you know, you know but we always left it up to the guidance people maybe in a sense
| B 44 | My understanding is that technically the guidance hours are gone a Principal can technically go off and get rid of the guidance. But no Principal in their right mind would do that personally speaking and that there would be a cut in the teaching hours and that is my. |
| B 45 | All to blame because you have to educate the normal teachers. Like teachers have to educate the public about the role of the teacher is and the guidance has to educate what exactly what it is they do. |
| B 46 | And am... And they don't see and because the guidance part of it, the counselling part of it so 'secretive' well that is the wrong word, not as open (J: Confidential) Confidential you know they don't see that part of it and I feel that it is time that you can always bring that to the staffroom but you don't have to divulge all that information and clearly educate the staff what we do and let imagine for a second what happens when we don't do and we can't deal with the burden that we have now and that is why we have to train and get all the teachers because today's students are very different to students 20 or 30 years ago. |
| B 47 | So that is what will affect the students then it is back to that teacher who is not trained and doesn't know and then is in a situation that it is too heavy for them and there is not the support or the time to deal with the issue properly and then you are in a whole different ball game. |
| B 48 | I hope that it wouldn't work, that it wouldn't affect me but I would agitated and disgruntled that I am trying to help a student. I am trying to get the best out of that student. I am trying to look after their mental health, their well being, and I brought them to a place that I am comfortable with that I know can't deal with anymore that they have to go to the next step the guidance counsellor but he is not there and then suddenly I have lost that student. |
| B 49 | have them down and they definitely won't go near the guidance counsellor because he is never there now because he is inside in class the whole time and the Principal, he is too busy and he won't go near them either. |

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C: Extract of Carol’s interview transcript

| C 1 | Not knowing what actually was behind it. I would have had very good relationships with my teachers in secondary school. I would have had a very good school experience in secondary and primary. I thought let this continue into another stage. It wasn't more I am going to be a teacher. It was more I had a good experience. |
| C 2 | It would have a lot to do with the teacher. If I did not like the teacher was that one area that would have led on okay. I would have had no perception because I wouldn't have done any of those subjects in primary school. |
| C 3 | I would say that the kids that we had coming in for micro teaching were of disadvantage or they came across from disadvantaged. |
| C 4 | So I said okay. One week I did how to start a car. How to drive a car. Another week was the basic skills of soccer. So as a result it was putting it into their everyday lives. |
| C 5 | There was a death in the school when I was there and it was a serious. (J: In second year) Yes and a serious thing. It happened over a weekend and I came in on Monday and I actually didn't even realise because I didn't hear. I would be from a village maybe 20 miles away. It happened late on Sunday evening and as it happened as a young teacher and coming in hearing that first thing and hearing that first thing and I didn't know how to react. I didn't know how to react with my colleagues in the staffroom and lastly I didn't know how to react with the students that were going to be in front of me that day. |
| C 6 | Looking back on it I was actually very lucky I know that the people that they brought in from the outside that I was very good friend that came in on one of these care supports. |
| C 7 | You know. As a result the Principal was very good I can't remember the guidance counsellor in that scenario. |
| C 8 | Then go on with your class. I was there thinking that teaching is not just opening a book it is about okay. What is going on in the weekend? As a result it kind of opened my mind to what is going on, those 3 or 4 days were very difficult dealing with people saying that they wanted to go out. |
| C 9 | I would say after college I was teaching in a voluntary secondary school and I would say that the kids were very good. From a well off background. Social issues and social problems didn't crop up they were there to learn they were there to do their best. |
| C 10 | There were 1 or 2 kids that wouldn't come to school. There was no kind of back up at home when they did come into school that was great. You are here today you weren't here yesterday. You weren't here the day before so as a result. So 1 or 2 of them just spent their time doing catch up, taking notes down. As a result of that one of them was taken out of her parents care. |
| C 11 | As I would say myself. The best education is not just learning things it is how well behaved you are. How you respect people? How you respect property, how you respect yourself. And that is the whole thing about education itself. It is not just learning of science things, learning off definitions. You could be the most ignorant person and as a result we are not educating you. |
| C 12 | Am I would say at times and as my role as assistant dean the pastoral care of it. You know, Why don't you have your journal? (loud voice) And then you know asking 'are you okay?' (soft voice) I sometimes find this hard. |
D: Extract of Derek’s Interview transcript.

**D 1** Well it was something that I always wanted to do I thought that it would be a nice job. Looked like something that I would be into playing sports. Thought that I would make a career out of it so of I went.

**D 2** There was a lot more theory then I thought would be in it. It wasn’t as practical as I thought but it was still practical to it but not as much as the impression that I had going into it.

**D 3** No to be honest. I remember it being mentioned in lectures and talked about in tutorials but nothing done practically. Not really discussed a huge amount. More so when you are on teaching practice when you see what is going on for real.

**D 4** J: Can you talk to me about your teaching practice in 2nd year? What did you think about it and what did you gain from it? D: Just the real insight into what the job was like instead of showing the stuff in lectures or tutorials. You got to see what was going on in schools and what was going on in the classrooms. That is what I thought of it.

**D 5** Because it was a boarding school, there were some half boarders and day boarders. So it was kind of different. It was kind of different do you know. Literally it was they had a full time school nurse. Do you know? So there was someone else always on hand. You wouldn’t really be going into it too much.

**D 6** No there wasn’t really that much and especially when you are a student you still have the real class teacher for any kind of issues they would be dealing with more than you.

**D 7** Well a teacher... well it is more passing the buck. Let someone else know what is going on. To be aware of issues and if there is an issue going on to not to ignore it. But at the end of the day I would see myself that you would be passing it on.

**D 8** You would with yourself but because of the structure you would refer it to the dean of the school. Or the guidance counsellors.

**D 9** It would be easier to talk to the student you could just step outside the door for a minute. There are windows in
| D 10 | Holistic means that everyone is involved. Isn’t it. In such the whole school from all members of staff. |
| D 11 | Just that you are a teacher that any student can come up to and......be it a minor or major problem. Maybe if it is a minor problem maybe the teacher can talk to them about it and help sort it out. If it is a major problem. The teacher must be there to listen to it. And as I said the problem will get passed on so. |
| D 12 | It is just that you would be the first person that a kid would come to with a problem. Something might happen in the middle of the day and you might be the first person that you walk into. |
| D 13 | I would put in the time for it I wouldn’t be turning them away or saying that I was busy. Like I was saying earlier it is not my job. I care I suppose is a way of saying it. |
| D 14 | Ah I suppose the system with our deans and our assistant deans. There is always either one or the other. It is handy that there is 2 career guidance that makes a difference or guidance as you call it. Silence..................(J: You think that having 2 career guidance counsellor adds to the system) Yeah there are always kind of there. |
| D 15 | Just maybe time constraints for teachers. They are on a timetable and they have to. They would be only to give student so much time at a time you know. They would try to fit them in as best they can but over a course of a day rather than immediately. |
| D 16 | No there isn’t really enough training it is more what you bring into it yourself already. Rather then what you have learned. |
| D 17 | The main type of thing is that if the counsellor was dealing with someone and they tell. I know that it is confidential. But if they kind of told you this is what we do for this kind of thing. If you were to solve a problem and you went to the guidance counsellor in such that they tell you what to do and it would feel that you were solving the problem yourself. Help and support. |
| D 18 | So I suppose a situation like questions and answers. Things that have happened before and what was done because generally problems were the same. So there can be the same issues that arrive time after time. |
| D 19 | I suppose that it is better like that they are dealing with problems that they don’t want out in the open. It is a handy service for them that they can pop in as such. |
| D 20 | That it goes among all subjects as such and that all teachers are involved. ..... |
| D 21 | The main one that I can think straight of is if students are talking about careers if they are on about my own job or something similar that |
| D 22 | Also what you can bring from your real life experiences like if students are asking about where to go to college and things like that just fill them in. |
| D 23 | I think they can be like I said earlier they can be a first port of call do you know if the kid needs someone. Something happens and they are just passing the teacher and they will just talk to them. Say that they get on with that teacher or if they are approachable. |
| D 24 | Well I say that main thing is that it is something new and a bit scary as such. (Silence) (J: So you feel) The fear of the on known and something new and not having much background in it. But I say if there were guidelines set in place for them just to help them along the way to get started. |
| D 25 | I think that the younger teachers would get involved because they wouldn’t be as set in their ways. They would be the students that they would get on more with. They would be more approachable. |
| D 26 | To be quite honest people will have to sit down and talk about what they are willing to do so that has to be one part. Someone should not be asked to take on something that they are not willing to do. A lot of people are willing. |
| D 27 | I was thinking on storming the Dail straight away. (Both laugh) There isn’t enough hours for them at the moment with so much going on. I don’t know if it is this school or schools across the board but in their job they are kept going. |
| D 28 | Well they will obviously be going back to the teachers more. They won’t be able to find a guidance counsellor because they will be teaching their subjects. Some schools if they lost a guidance counsellor. (J: So you think that the students will go back to the teachers) They will go back to their teachers. |
| D 29 | Teachers will feel under more pressure as they are taking more on. They may feel that this isn’t about them that this is about their hands they won’t know what to do. (J: What will happen then ) They will still be knocking on the guidance counsellors door. |
| D 30 | Firstly it’s knowing what is going to happen. Knowing what the teacher’s role is. So you get all these things sent on to you and you don’t pay full attention. You need more formal training maybe someone coming into the school giving a formal talk. Even something small like guidelines. Step 1 step 2 that kind of thing. |
| D 31 | You would find it hard to ignore the exam class to go dealing with the other issues. It might not be right but you would feel pressure that way. The exam classes and the exam students do come first in reality. |
| D 32 | Yeah that is what it comes back to and that is job one why you are here. The other things are kind of side jobs. You realistically would like to help but it is hard to find the time. You would if you could. |
### Extract of Ewan's interview transcript.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>E1</th>
<th>Hugely connected around group dynamics, emotional development, and emotional distress, personal under performance. So we would have done a lot in philosophy and social studies as part of it. (J: That sounds well supported). It was having said that it was a new phenomenon. I hate to use the word but airy fairy as well. It was textbook bound and we would have studied case studies and things like that. We would in out teaching practice it would have become more practical in our teaching.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E2</td>
<td>Well I had a year of secondary school which wasn't too bad but literally you had guys coming out of secondary teaching in the primary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E3</td>
<td>Like what happens and what is still happening unfortunately when you walked in the person gave you the timetable and the classroom and that was it. In ten weeks he shook your hand and took that textbook back.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E4</td>
<td>The teacher is the primary caregiver. That is what I would say to you. What is their role? I would see it to make sure that no harm that can come to the child that is the first thing. The teacher should make sure that happens. The second thing, create an environment or she would create an environment that is comfortable enough for students that could actually develop and progress. I am a primary caregiver I have to protect and then help. Encourage help to facilitate to develop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E5</td>
<td>The worst mistake that a teacher can make is to think that they are a psychologist. Now I would see my role as assess what is going on and direct the students to the best person to deal with that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E6</td>
<td>I think if you can assess it and have the child comfortable enough that they might be able to talk to you without going into detail. You might assess it and say I suspect that there is a childcare issue there. But I am not going to deal with that my role is to go. The first thing is I am obliged to report it. Once I have that done I should follow up and when I go back to the class I have to remember that my job is not done. So I can be scaffolding for that child so I can offer myself as scaffolding for that child and not to jump in the deep end.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E7</td>
<td>You make a mistake as a teacher and you can lose your entire career and how people see you can be changed. You know. You can lose everything. So you have to protect yourself that is a huge challenge. The other challenge is I don't know enough.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E8</td>
<td>I love the question. (J: Laugh) Holistic approach. I worry about this whole thing and I am involved in mentoring (J: Okay) And they are banging us in the back of the head with this holistic approach. What can I gather from it is that we can develop the perfect person. Which is never going to happen?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E9</td>
<td>I don't go in and teach the tuiteach gineachdeich only. I got a bag of tricks and a bag of questions and deal with any issues that ensue. So that is why a lot of teachers are on valium. It is a difficult job and we must have that holistic........................................ The holistic approach is my attitude and my bag of tricks my staff connection and the whole school connection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E10</td>
<td>In my four years teaching, my 10 11 years in my training or my teaching. Now. I think that it is a good thing and a bad thing. We have to go in there with pastoral care. We have to admit that it is human beings in front of us.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E11</td>
<td>Now days you know things that kids have to deal with like internet pornography, paedophilia with fighting and bullying. Like it was probably was there when I was working earlier on but now they are being bombarded so much.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E12</td>
<td>When I walk in the door to me it is that I make sure that I have 30 kids in front of me that a. I know their names for god's sake. B. I kind of understand where they are coming from the kind of issues that they are dealing with and that they will feel that they could come and talk to me or maybe hint towards me that there is something wrong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E13</td>
<td>(Role 1) How to identify people in my group who have issues issues with struggling to pay things in the school. Am...Food eating. Okay. 2nd role then would be a conduit or shoulder to lean on that they can either come and talk to me or I can direct them to where to go to get support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E14</td>
<td>So the primary thing in the education would be the role of not fitting into society now but establishing yourself and your identity. I don’t like this idea of making them fit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E15</td>
<td>What is working that the work that people like you and Paul do. I see that. You are on top of things and you are available. Now I don’t know with the new changes coming in but someone needs to have an agenda change because of what has happened.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E16</td>
<td>There is very strong support now we have had serious cases and childcare issues and the likes of you. Paul. Eileen. I think that team thing is working. I think that the bullying thing (J: PSB) Yes the PSB I think that is working.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E17</td>
<td>The staff here is very dynamic. I have worked in around 4 or 5 schools but I would see things between the staffroom and the classroom. Every staff member here will have 4 conversations. But friendly conversations such as how are you going. I would see that as a pastoral kind of care as well. I would see it happening with nearly every teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E18</td>
<td>The conversation going on between staff and students undermines this you are the teacher and I am the student. It is creating more of an atmosphere of look we are all here to work for one another. I am the expert and the teacher bit come there is nothing to stop you coming and talking to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E19</td>
<td>What are definitely not working are steps down to stuff. Only if there is an issue in my room. I only thing that I get is that you were called to stand up in a staff meeting to say that there is an issue and keep an eye out for it. I don't think that is enough. So you have to be careful here a lot of this is sensitive stuff and you can’t say by the way this is it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E20</td>
<td>It is highly confidential we will keep you briefed. I would like to see a situation that if there was a student in</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The teacher would be going here we go again more work to do. Nut I think for it to be more productive something like that should be in place. I don’t think that is working.

Well the main thing that I brought was experience, I am older so I did it. Now the reason that I have done it because I have made mistakes. Even mistakes now if I make them. So maybe it was that I brought core people skills.

I would be very wary of those: very scared of one thing physically I would have to be careful that I was not in a one to one.

I do not have the training and I recognise that. I would be very careful of that. I have to make sure that I don’t add to the situation.

And one of the things that a mentor is not and most of the research will show you. He is not a counsellor so be careful so you don’t go in there as a shoulder to cry on. Not Jim’ll fix it and you are not a shoulder to cry on. So what you are we have to decide.

And they you would have other things like discipline behaviour and the code of practice. But there was nobody talking about pastoral care. A lot of people would say to me do this but if you have a problem pass it on to the guidance. They do that stuff. The counsellors do that stuff. You know. So whatever stuff pass it on.

Now the school has a policy on pastoral care. I have to say that I have no idea what it says. I have read the book from cover to cover. But I don’t have any idea. If you asked me what the policy here I couldn’t waffle for you if I wanted......................................... You know what I mean. Even the language used is kind of threatening in a way. Pastoral care is a good thing. But we view it as if we don’t do it we will all be sued or locked up.

And it is discreet. And I think that what makes it work. It is so discreet that I don’t recognise it half the time. I think that is very good. People say does it really exist. That is a great question. I hope that it does. I have seen serious cases. Tough cases and in like bullets. People like you are like a ghost. They only come out at certain times.

There is one that goes on and we don’t recognise it and that is peer counselling and I have seen it. A couple of kids now that would have issues which could be asparagus or something. They will always have one friend. And if you sat here you would see them walking around.

I did a story for TG4 or RTE in Wexford CBS where a 5th year would take a first year for the entire year. And they meet them day own and they meet them on a weekly basis and they are there buddies for the whole year.

I think that I have spoken on that. Basically it is that if we are going to have guidance counselling here right you are the guidance counsellor, fair enough but what do I know about it as a staff. Principal. Deputy Principal. Guidance Counsellor.

What does he do? Somebody call you guidance counsellor. Some call you career guidance. They are two very different terms. The question that I have is which .................................................. So a whole school means that whole school. That everyone knows what you do everyone knows what they have to do in relation to you. So we just don’t say that is a guidance issue. That is a policy issue.

I think instead of passing things over that those people coordinate discussions like you might come in and you might say that we are all going to have a discussion on tough cases and we are going to have a discussion on them for an hour..................... Pigeon holing is good and the labelling has to be done but we have to be careful how we use them.

They have to get involved so everyone is busy and we here this mantra going around and it is true. But I think that there is payback in it for the teachers. If they contribute they get something back.

I am not just going to teach about tuiséal ginidicach I am going to look at different things and I am actually going to talk to James about the group. I am going to go to the Dean and say what is the story here. Now that is pastoral care.

There is a solution to everything. I am the teacher so I have to create the link between the issue and that solution and make sure that it goes through me.

It is what is known as cost cutting. At the expense of the children. They are putting the people back into the class teaching which is great. The person that is losing out is the person that needs counselling or pastoral care they lose out. We saw the primary schools.

What will happen now is that you will say I am sorry I am in class, woodwork at the moment and I can’t get out. What will I do with the child then tell them to stay in class. And then when are you free. Well I am off 5th period now that is ridiculous.

What it will do is it will water it down I will have less responsibility. You won’t be in my face, I won’t see you so. It will also create an atmosphere of it is not really important. If we could afford to cut you then it certainly wasn’t important.
F: Extract of Frank's interview transcript.

F1 To be truthful it was probably a job. I actually wanted to do English in college and history in college and I kind of just fell into it. I never thought about teaching until I was in fourth year I suppose.

F2 From the course (J: From the course) Not really - very little. One thing stands out in my head one thing that we thought call the child's name first before you ask them a question. So you just don't go you. That you allow the child to settle themselves and get ready. That is the only thing now to be honest.

F3 Yeah and they felt that was the best way for them to cope with it. I don't know if it would have come out

F4 In that situation there if your initial words were go and talk to the guidance counsellor what would you feel about

F5 Rather than me going in and saying that I want you to sit down. Often a hand on the elbow. Talking away and working is the individual teachers giving up of their own time. And actually caring for the whole person there and sometimes they are fed up, sometimes they are happy. Am............. Some days they are just talking away. You can't spot if you teaching 200 kids every day.............. You might offer them a kind word. Sometimes a kind word is better than sitting down and having a big meeting.

F6 It is of course yeah. It is a major part of it. We are not teaching little machines to get A's and B's. There is a whole person there and sometimes they are fed up, sometimes they are happy. Am............. Some days they are just talking away. You can't spot if you teaching 200 kids every day.............. You might offer them a kind word. Sometimes a kind word is better than sitting down and having a big meeting.

F7 Usually...................... it is just their body language I suppose really. In classes you see them. Often you will have kids coming up well not often. It happens when kids will come and just say can I talk. And they don't want to go through the formal channels. And that works for them but if it is something big then you can't do it. You have to push it on. But often a chat and a bit of take it handy for a while can help too.

F8: J: How are you with that part? A student coming up to you and basically pouring their heart out to you. F: I'd be okay with it as long as it is not something major major major. Then you are into legalities. But if the kid is there and they are upset about something from home. That can be dealt with a kind word. Am you know......................... None of us came from normal houses. Seven heaven world.

F9 Nurturing the whole child. Not to turn them into little grade machines. Realising there is a personality behind the face and behind the marks. Helping them to become the best that they can be. The happiest and the best. And the two of those usually go hand in hand.

F10 You are a support structure for the parents. The parents are the major influence on it. Friends as well and the teacher would probably be 3rd in line down there. But they are a major influence parents and friends. The teacher is probably 3rd but an important structure to be there from the outside looking in.

F11 Parents would phone me. And might not want to go down the official route bit because I get on well with the child we would go into a class and sit down and have a chat.

F12 A lot of teachers do it. They might look at me and say that I don't do it. Am because it is done behind closed doors. I say it is the level of interest and the level of enthusiasm and the level of genuine care I think............. I always say you give respect you get respect back in buckets and that is part of respecting people.

F13 I think to a degree the anti bullying scheme here is overworked............... I think that we are in trouble of being stuck with legalities. Am in regards to a spontaneous sorting out of the issue. And before it sprouts.

F14 What is working is the individual teachers giving up of their own time. And an actually caring............... I think that in fairness that up to 80% of teachers would do it anyway. I am a big fan of the old adage. If it is not broke why fix it.

F15 That is very important a safe environment. I think that we are providing that. As regards........... It works for me it wouldn't work for everybody some people need structures. I naturally rebel against structures.

F16 Very poor you were literally just dumped. This was the early nineties you were literally put in people lectured at you. We had no groups as regards like a tutorial to find out how did you get on. I don't remember if we ever had them they certainly don't stick out if we did.

F17 You need structures in the school but I feel that there is always a place for the nature of teachers and kids............... Sometimes it can be seen as a natural process. Am............. I suppose to use modern jargon an organic process. Where you just talk to the students and we can get it sorted.

F18 Rather than me going in and saying that I want you to sit down. Often a hand on the elbow. Talking away and saying are you okay. I do it every day especially when we are coming to exams and the kids are under pressure.

F19 J: In that situation there if your initial words were go and talk to the guidance counsellor what would you feel about that part. F: I would be uncomfortable. I would feel that I was passing the buck. I don't know as a teacher especially with the older students that you develop a relationship over the years with them. There is a degree of trust in that. And a degree that you are in loco parentis. They are almost like your own babies to a certain degree.

F20 Yeah and they felt that was the best way for them to cope with it. I don't know if it would have come out otherwise. You know so therefore there is a place for you know. But you have to be aware of it.

F21 Ah you just never are it is just part of .............. it is in built in you. You are told in your early days as a teacher. By older teachers probably. You have to mind yourself.
Not of the time you get people coming in lecturing at you. Small groups 6 or 7. Young teachers with and experienced teacher saying lads this is what happens informally.

It is very affective we won’t go down any avenues but it is very affective. Yeah I would have the height of respect for the guidance counsellors. It is a job that I couldn’t do.................. There is a genuine sense that they are minded. Am............and you feel of there was a child with a problem that you could go to the guidance counsellor and they wouldn’t mind it.

But of course you have confidentiality issues. Am................It really is a need to know basis. Am it is a very hard very tough one to call. It depends on the individual teachers and what they would do with that information.................. English that you avoid certain poems you avoid certain issues when there are students in there with issues. When you find yourself in the middle of it you go Jesus Christ. And you steer away from it yeah.

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Yeah well it means that it goes from management all the way down to the teachers. Am................ a everyone is in it together. We are here to mind kids it is not a company it is a school a place where kids are meant to be minded and nurtured. They are like little potatoes that you put into a pot. Into a planting pot and let them grow and water them and feed them away.

I see it as my role I can’t turn around and ignore it if they are crying and that. I am not going to ignore it. Am you deal with it and over the years you get more experienced you make less mistakes. You still make mistakes.

There is a confidence in yourself I have seen it before and in the years gone by you would have seen. You can draw on your experience.

The role of the teacher has always been involved guidance counselling in my view that is the way I thought it was that you are just not there to give them A’s and B’s you are there to mind the kids for their parents and mind the kids for themselves. And I get great satisfaction out of it.

Yeah am........................ I think kids with the amount of break ups in the country and the amount of kids in troubled houses it is a disaster.

Dysfunctional societies and dysfunctional areas if we don’t keep on top of that we you will end with, you are in danger of getting an underclass in the country who don’t know how to cope financially, socially or psychologically and we are serious danger of that.

They probably won’t. They probably won’t. There will be no place for them to go. It is possible that they will go to teachers individual teachers that will always happen anyway. It is the nature of human relationships they will find someone they trust.

Sometimes the guidance counsellor can do things kind of informally but when they are gone it becomes all paperwork. Everything is recorded and suddenly it is a bigger issue and I feel that a lot of kids don’t want this written down. I just need a chat. A disaster. A disaster.

Guidance counsellors are trained fill’ it. I am not and I would be terrified that I would say the wrong thing. And I feel that an awful lot of teachers would step back from that and say I don’t want to know because they would be afraid of saying the wrong thing.

When you go in what are you going to do when you have 30 and they all decide to go mad like we use to do in school.
Appendix L: Extracts from Research Diary

28th March 2012

Pilot Survey, I sent five surveys for a pilot survey. I received positive feedback about the types of questions. One remarked that they felt that the survey was a bit too long. However, it was in line with the time allocation outlined in the information sheet.

A key piece of feedback was that when two of the respondents opened the survey using the search engine Google chrome, they experienced problems. The appearance of the survey was different and the response boxes were in the incorrect place which would confuse the respondents. However, the survey opened fine when using internet explorer. This was crucial information as I was planning on sending the survey out to a school whose email is hosted on Google. I amended the email and included a recommendation for the survey to be opened using internet explorer if the respondents experienced any issues.

29th March 2012

I was nervous sending out the survey to the staff of the post-primary school. I was concerned about the response rate. I am aware that the school itself has a staff that are competent in using internet surveys especially SurveyMonkey. However, I understood that the staff was coming close to Easter holidays so they would be busy.

30th March 2012

I received seven responses so far. I realise that this is very early but I have conflicting feeling. On one hand I am happy that I am receiving responses even though it is before the Easter holidays, on the other hand I was hoping for a greater immediate response. I understand that these expectations may not have been realistic.

31st March 2012

I received eight more responses. I feel more at ease today. I also received some feedback from a respondent. She remarked that the survey was too long. I was aware that this may be an issue but I feel that the length of the survey was appropriate with the research topic. I did feel that this may affect the response rate.
7th April 2012

I received one response today. I decided today that I would send a follow up email once the Easter holidays were over to assist the number of responses.

17th April 2012

I sent a follow up email attaching all the required information sheets. I felt that because it was after Easter break the response rate would be more positive.

19th April 2012

All of the purposive sampling has responded. I have received 30 surveys. I am relieved about reaching the target. However I am anxious because twelve people have opted to be interviewed and a now I am entering Phase 2.

23rd April 2012

Today I placed the twelve names in an envelope and I picked out the names of the teachers that I am planning on interviewing. I was observed by the other guidance counsellor working in the school. I chose him for this role to verify that the correct procedure was followed. I have organised a pilot interview to iron out any issues and to get used to following the interview schedule.

25th April 2012

Pilot interview

Location: office at the back of the campus. I choose this location because I felt that the office provided a quiet space with suitable acoustics and furniture. The interviews are mainly after school so I hope that the interviewees won’t present as tired. Reason for selecting this time is that it adheres to the time constraints for the research and provides a positive solution to interviewing respondents with minimum disruption.

4.20 p.m. 24th April 2012

I felt nervous before the interview today. I chose a quiet space located at the back of the school. I met with the interviewee and discussed the subject information sheet. I felt my confidence rise as I discussed the information about my research. I felt confident in the
equipment that I was using and I feel that this was as a result of running a pilot interview where I resolved a number of the issues.

I feel that the interviewee was comfortable and relaxed. Body language was positive and he was sitting with his leg crossed and arms on the table. The table was a medium round glass table which allowed for suitable location for the recorder, and also provided intimacy for the interview.

I found the schedule was a good help but I found I rarely drifted away from it. I found that there were two questions that appeared a bit repetitive but I feel that it set a context for the section in which I was dealing with. I felt that there were two occasions that the interviewee answered with 'extra feeling' when answering questions which referred to my role in the school. In one of these occasions our eyes met and the interviewee shifted on the chair in an uncomfortable way. I feel that this is a key area to be aware of as a practitioner research.

Interview I: Anthony

4.10 p.m. 24th April 2012

Length 1 hr approx

I was not happy how the interview started. I feel it would be better to devise an introduction and stick to it.

Secondly, I divided the interview schedule into sections. At the start of each section I introduced the section to the interviewee. I feel that this segmented the interview and did not allow for the interview to flow. I was recommended by my supervisor to introduce the topic at the beginning and I feel that this would be a better a solution. I will introduce the section at the beginning in the next interview.

I was nervous at the beginning but I felt more relaxed as the interview went on. I feel that the pilot interview allowed me to test the interview schedule and iron out issues. I believe that being a trained Guidance Counsellor experienced in one to one interviews helped me settle into the interview. I linked into my internal supervisor to manage my feelings and emotions as we went through the interview. I observed that the interviewee was comfortable and he was visibly engaged in the topic. The interviewee was extremely passionate when discussing the area of offering a balanced education. The interviewee spoke with confidence but also
moved off topic at time. I found this element a challenge. I feel that the interviewee may have felt that he had to fulfil an hour.

I was aware that there were a number of occasions that I asked probing questions which may have directed that interview. This was when we were discussing the role of regular teachers. I was aware of this once the interviewee started speaking. I feel that this was at heart to explore a specific area but I believe that I must be mindful of that.

I felt that the interviewee was very knowledgeable about the area of pastoral care until we got to the area of whole school guidance. I am curious when I transcribe the interview will I see obvious direction shift as a result of my bias. Did I influence the interviewee? I found the interviewee really spoke positively around the role of guidance team in the school. I am concerned around my position as a practitioner researcher and the possibility that my bias is presenting in the interviewee. I will reflect on this and apply a critical eye to the transcribed document and use this reflection as an influence for my next interview.

Interview 2: Bill

4.20 p.m. 24th April 2012 Length 1 hr approx

I felt a small amount of trepidation about today's interview. The character that I was interviewing was a very honest character and I had experiences of him being confrontational. The interviewee was visually interested in the topic; he sat forward hands moving with expression as he spoke about role of loco parentis. The interviewee required very little prompting so I relaxed early into the interviewee. I was struck when he listed key counselling skills such as listening, non judgemental support and genuineness. I wanted to interrupt at a number of occasions but I didn’t. I felt that I allowed the interviewee to lead the interview structured around the interview schedule. The interviewee spoke about personal issues in the interview. I believe that my knowledge of the interviewee and utilising my key counselling skills allowed for the interviewee to tell his story safely and supported. I felt that his ability to be there in a pastoral sense for the students was as a result of his background.

I observed the interviewee sit back when the topic was around school structures and teachers failing to engage with students. However, when he spoke about talking with students and exploring issues he often lent forward and was really engaged. There were a few times that I
felt that the interviewee was going off topic or reiterating a previous points so I used subtle interventions such as redirection or prompts.

I felt that the interviewee was comfortable in the topic and did not deliver rhetoric to sustain a good buddy relationship. However, at one point he spoke about the guidance role and apologised for his opinion. I acknowledged how this made me feel a slight internal tight feeling but I was happy that I picked up on it. I was very conscious of the interviewee’s body language during the interview and I found it interesting how visual his interest in providing pastoral support was and how comfortable he was in his dealing with the students. I found it heart warming to see such a passion for a role in education.

Interview 3: Carol

4.00 p.m. 27th April 2012

The interview with Carol went ahead at 4 o clock. Carol explained before the interview started that she was a bit tired. I offered to postpone the interview but she said that she preferred to go ahead. I became aware early into the interview that Carol’s tiredness was presenting during specific questions. I felt at the time that I should make reference to this and possibly allow her to take a breadth. I refrained from doing this. On reflection I feel that allowing the interviewee time to ground her-self might have helped. However, if I suggested this at the time it may have made her very self conscious. I feel another contributing factor may have been the time of the interview. The interview was on after school after a busy schedule of classes for Carol. On reflection spending more time with Carol planning the interview may have supported a more conducive atmosphere. However, finding time in a busy school schedule under such an intensive research timetable is challenging.

In the interview Carol spoke honestly about her experiences and on occasion she spoke about a time during her school placement when a student died accidentally. I was taken aback and I was curious about the story of the student. My internal supervisor made a check and I decided to allow the interviewee the time and space to report how she was affected by it. I feel that the counselling skills allowed me to provide Carol with an interview environment that encouraged her to get engaged with the topic.

I was aware that I was using a lot of paraphrasing during the middle segment of the interview. I felt that the use of the paraphrasing provided Carol with an opportunity to hold onto her
train of thought. I had felt that Carol was following through a train of thought then she would shift and I felt that the paraphrasing allowed for greater depth.

I was challenged by was allowing Carol to search for words herself. On at least 2 occasions I interjected and provided a word that I felt she was searching for. On reflection I believe I should have provided the space for Carol to deliver on her own thoughts without any direction. I noted these two occasions for the purpose of reflection afterwards.

It was evident to me after Carol’s interview that there were some issues that needed to be addressed before scheduling the next interview. I felt that I would check in with the next interviewer and ensure that the interview was not going to be after a busy day where they would present as tired.

Interview 4: Derek

4.00 p.m. 30th April 2012

I felt nervous before the interview with Derek. I would have known Derek well through work and I was concerned that this would make the interview awkward. The start of the interview was a bit awkward. I felt that Derek was resistant in his responses at first and I noted during the interview that I was asking a lot of questions. After noting this I found myself leaving more silences and settling more into the interview.

Initially I had concerns because the other interviewers were full of chat. Derek answered all of my questions in a short and precise manner. I felt at the time that I needed to go a little deeper in specific areas like how he felt about certain situations. I noted at 7 minutes into the interview that I felt comfortable in receiving short answers and then following up with an explorative question. This was as a result of an insight that Derek gave me about his pastoral role. I felt at the time that his answer was ‘his answer’ and was how he felt. That he did not need a huge amount to words to communicate this. I do feel that the experience that I have in working with students in a counselling role helped me to provide the environment that allowed for Derek to feel comfortable. Additionally, Derek provided honest and in-depth descriptions in how he delivered his role and his true feeling on the topic. I feel that there is a challenge in practitioner research and if you embrace it you can reach great depth with a colleague.
Interview 5: Ewan

4.10 p.m. 2nd May 2012

Ewan is a teacher in the school that so far I have had very few interactions with. I know him as a colleague, but we do not work in the same departments. What struck me first was Ewan’s energy before the recording started. I was prepared for a high intensity interview but I was surprised by the relaxed nature of it. Ewan made me feel very relaxed because he engaged fully in the questions. I was also taken aback by his comfort in presenting an argument. Of all of the people I interviewed Ewan was well able to command the area of pastoral care. He is an older teacher and I would say very energetic in his role. He spoke about a love for teaching that was infectious. I found that I was reacting to his enthusiasm and interest in the topic. At least 2 occasions I responded with a laugh when he spoke in a humorous way.

In the interview he described the role of the Guidance Counsellor he spoke of it as an emergency service. I had to engage my internal supervisor to allow Ewan speak about his understanding of the role. I felt challenged but I feel it provided an insight into what regular teachers think.

Later in the interview we discussed Budget 2012. Ewan was visibly annoyed and agitated when expressing his feeling about the cut. He spoke with great clarity on the topic but I was conscious of my feeling around the topic. I kept my emotions in check as I have deep feelings around the cuts in guidance provisions and it is a topic that is at the top of the agenda at the moment. In the other interviews I didn’t experience these strong feelings before. I feel that this is as a result of the emotions that Ewan used to describe his annoyance at the cuts.

Interview 6: Frank

4.05 p.m. 15th May 2012

I was looking forward to this interview because I am aware of the type of pastoral work that Frank does in the school. Frank is personable and is a teacher that I have worked very closely with. I was aware of these feelings so I found time before the interview to ground myself. I felt Frank was a bit nervous at the start of the interview because this was a new
situation, Frank as the interviewee and me as the interviewer. I found our professional relationship and trust built up over the years aided Frank’s honest responses. I was affected when he spoke of his own family situation and I found myself linking in to my own feelings around family when he was talking. I feel that having this internal checking mechanism developed over the years training as a Guidance Counsellor helped me to focus.

I used some basic counselling skills to help develop ideas and to explore the topic further. I used listening skills, paraphrasing, explorative questioning to get to a deeper level. I feel that this was warranted because Frank revealed key insights into the work that he does with students outside of his teacher role. I learned new insights about a colleague, I felt that this would not change our working relationship because I feel that he felt well supported during the interview and I had explained that he could review the transcripts through member checking afterwards.

There were two occasions that I registered deep feeling during the interview. This was when Frank described the amount unstructured pastoral support that he participated in. I noted an internal conflict. I feel it links in with the possible changing role of how guidance will be provided post Budget 2012 and my feelings around that.

After the interview, it was evident that our working dynamic had shifted slightly and we both had to adjust to the situation. I believe that this shift was similar in three of the interviews with people that I have a close working relationship with. In the other two cases this shift lasted only a short while and then it settled back again. I feel that this is the challenge to practitioner research. The interviewees settle in quickly in the interview process because they know you, however, there is a shift in the relationship afterwards that takes a short time to settle. This is why I feel member checking is important in allowing the interviewee the opportunity to have their voice heard.