Academic guidance

Counselling and guidance, referred to as psychological and educational support, provided to pupils/students in nursery schools, schools and other educational institutions involves:

- identifying pupils’/students’ individual developmental and educational needs and psychological and physical abilities, and environmental factors which have impact on their functioning in a nursery school, school or educational institution; and
- addressing the needs identified.

The assessment of children’s and young people’s developmental needs is one of the main responsibilities of teachers and specialists working with them.

Psychological and educational support aims to help pupils/students fulfil their developmental potential and create conditions for their active and full participation in the life of their (nursery) school or institution and in their social environment.

The responsibilities of teachers, class / group tutors and specialists in (nursery) schools and educational institutions include, in particular:

- assessing pupils’/students’ individual developmental and educational needs and psychological and physical abilities;
- identifying pupils’/students’ strengths, predispositions, interests and aptitudes or talents;
- identifying reasons behind academic failures or difficulties in pupils’/students’ functioning, including barriers and constraints which make it difficult for them to function and participate in the life of their (nursery) school or educational institution;
- taking measures which help pupils/students develop their competences and potential in order to enhance the effectiveness of their learning process and improve their functioning;
- collaborating with a counselling and guidance centre in diagnostic and post-diagnostic processes, in particular, regarding:
  - performance/functional behaviour assessment;
  - barriers and constrains in the environment which make it difficult for pupils/students to function and participate in the life of their (nursery) school or institution;
  - outcomes of measures taken to improve pupils’/students’ functioning and further measures to be planned.

Teachers, class / group tutors and specialists in (nursery) schools and other educational institutions undertake, in particular, the following activities:

- in nursery schools: pedagogical observation aimed at early identification of developmental disharmonies and early intervention; and for children in one-year pre-school preparatory
education: pedagogical observation ending with an analysis and assessment of children’s readiness for school (pre-school diagnosis);

- in schools: pedagogical observation during ongoing work with pupils/students which is aimed at identifying:
  - learning difficulties and, for pupils in grades I to III of the primary school, competence deficits, language disorders, and the risk of specific learning difficulties;
  - potential and interests;
  - special aptitudes or talents;
  - support for pupils/students in making education and career choices during ongoing work with them.

Where it is found that a child needs special educational support in view of his/her difficulties or special talents, the nursery school, alternative preschool education setting, school or the institution initiates measures to meet these needs. This is an area where an educational institution provides counselling and guidance / educational and psychological support.

Counselling and guidance sessions offered to children and young people are a form of such support.

Psychological and educational support is also offered to pupils’/students’ parents and teachers in the form of counselling or guidance sessions, workshops and training sessions.

Support offered to parents and teachers aims to:

- assist them in addressing pupils’/students’ educational and learning problems;
- develop their own educational skills to increase the effectiveness of counselling and guidance offered to pupils/students.

Counselling sessions, workshops and training sessions are conducted by teachers, class / group tutors and specialists.

Specialists providing counselling and guidance in (nursery) schools and other educational institutions include in particular:

- psychologists,
- pedagogues,
- speech therapists,
- careers advisers, and
- educational therapists.

The responsibilities of specialists employed in (nursery) schools and other educational institutions include:

- conducting diagnostic examinations and assessments of children and young people;
- providing psychological and educational support in forms suited to the needs identified, and cooperating with teachers and other specialists in the field;
- carrying out preventive and information activities;
- assisting parents and teachers in identifying children’s needs and supporting their development.

If there is no improvement in the pupil’s/student’s functioning despite the psychological and educational support provided, the head of a given (nursery) school or educational institution, with the parents’ or adult learner’s consent, submits a request to a counselling and guidance centre to conduct an assessment / diagnosis and recommend methods for addressing the problems identified.
Counselling and guidance centres, including specialised centres, are specialised institutions of the school education system which provide psychological and educational support and assist (nursery) schools and other educational institutions in this area.

Counselling and guidance centres can be:

- public or
- non-public.

Specialised centres focus on selected and specific problems, in line with the needs of the local community.

According to the School Education Information System (System Informacji Oświatowej, SIO), as at 30 September 2017, there were 1099 counselling and guidance centres.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of centre</th>
<th>Public</th>
<th>Non-public</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counselling and guidance centres</td>
<td>586</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>1099</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The administration of public counselling and guidance centres is a school education task of districts (powiat; the local government level above communes).

A public counselling and guidance centre provides psychological and educational support free of charge.

The managing body of a centre determines its catchment area.

Counselling and guidance centres offer services to:

- children from birth,
- young people,
- parents,
- teachers,
- nursery schools, schools and other educational institutions.

(Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 1 February 2013 on the detailed operational rules for public counselling and guidance centres and other public specialised centres: Journal of Law, item 199, and 2017, item 1647).

The tasks of a public counselling and guidance centre include:

- conducting assessments/making diagnosis for children and young people;
- issuing statements/opinions and certificates concerning education for children and young people;
- providing direct support to pupils/students and their parents;
- problem-prevention activities and tasks supporting the educational function of (nursery) schools and other educational institutions, including support offered to teachers in addressing problems related to education and care;
- support provided to (nursery) schools and other educational institutions.

When counselling and guidance offered in a (nursery) school or institution does not bring expected results or it is necessary to assess whether the child needs support in forms other than psychological and educational support because of his/her educational needs, it is advisable to perform a specialist
assessment in a counselling and guidance centre. Support is sought from counselling and guidance centres on a voluntary basis.

Such centres perform assessments, provide information or give opinions on the results of such assessments at the request of a parent or an adult learner. Statements issued by the centres are provided to the (nursery) school/educational institution attended by the pupil/student concerned only at the request of the parent or the adult learner.

Assessment is conducted in order to determine children’s individual developmental and educational needs and individual psychological and physical abilities; to explain the mechanisms governing their behaviour in relation to the problem reported; and to indicate the way in which the problem could be addressed.

An assessment of the child’s needs helps to identify the course of action to be taken as part of education and support for his/her development.

In particular, an assessment may result in:

- issuing an **opinion/statement**, including:
  1. statements recommending individualised early support for development; these are the only statements issued by assessment committees in public counselling and guidance centres;
  2. statements confirming specific learning difficulties;
  3. statements on deferred entry into compulsory education;
  4. statements on earlier entry into primary education;
  5. statements granting permission to follow an individualised programme;
  6. statements recommending compulsory one-year preparatory classes to be attended outside a nursery school, preschool class or alternative preschool education setting;
  7. statements concerning a child’s full-time or part-time compulsory education outside school settings;
  8. statements on exempting a child from learning a second foreign language;
  9. statements recommending the inclusion of a child in therapeutic classes;
  10. statements recommending an individualised learning path;
  11. statements recommending modification of educational requirements based on curricula to adjust them to a pupil’s/student’s individual educational needs;
  12. statements recommending priority in admitting a student with health problems to a post-primary school;
  13. statements on permission to employ a juvenile for the purpose of training for a particular job or of vocational training;
  14. statements confirming no contraindications to the performance of work or other paid work by a child;
  15. statements concerning other matters relating to the education of children and young people (e.g. for doctors or courts of justice);

- issuing a **certificate** recommending:
  1. special education,
  2. rehabilitation-and-education classes,
  3. individualised one-year preschool preparatory classes,
  4. individualised learning for children and young people;

- direct psychological and educational support provided by a centre to children, parents or both children and parents;
- support provided to teachers and specialists working with a child in the educational institution attended by the child.
Certificates are issued by assessment committees based in counselling and guidance centres, including public specialised centres.

Certificates are issued at parents’ or an adult learner’s request. They may participate in a session of an assessment committee and present their position. Certificates are issued to applicants only. A certificate can be appealed against within 14 days to the head of the regional education authorities via the committee issuing it.

A certificate may be cancelled or amended at parents’ request.

(Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 7 September 2017 on certificates and statements issued by assessment committees at public counselling and guidance centres: Journal of Law, item 1743)

Non-public counselling and guidance centres are authorised to issue statements in cases where the regulations do not require that they should be issued by public centres. To be authorised to issue a statement confirming specific learning difficulties, deferring a child’s entry into compulsory education or recommending earlier entry into primary education, non-public counselling and guidance centres, established under Art. 82 of the School Education Act, should employ staff with qualifications required of staff in public counselling and guidance centres.

Direct assistance offered to children and young people and their parents by counselling and guidance centres includes in particular:

- therapy provided to children, young people and their families;
- support offered to children and young people in need of counselling and guidance or support in choosing an area of study and occupation and in planning education and career;
- support for parents in the assessment of children’s and young people’s developmental and educational needs as well as their psychological and physical abilities, and in addressing educational problems.

In particular, centres perform their problem-prevention tasks and those supporting the educational and care-related functions of (nursery) schools and other educational institutions by providing support to teachers, class / group tutors and specialists in:

- the assessment of children’s and young people’s developmental and educational needs, including the identification of risk of specific learning difficulties for pupils in grades I to III of the primary school;
- providing counselling and guidance / psychological and educational support;
- developing and implementing individual educational-and-therapeutic programmes and individual rehabilitation classes;
- addressing teaching and education-related problems.

Centres also offer support to (nursery) schools and other educational institutions by:

- implementing measures to prevent addictions and other problems of children and young people;
- educating children, young people, parents and teachers on mental health protection;
- providing support in collaboration with in-service teacher training institutions.

At a written request of the head of a (nursery) school / educational institution, or of disabled children’s parents, a public centre is obliged to help identify conditions necessary for learning, specialist equipment and teaching resources, including ICT.
The following institutions are also required to collaborate with mainstream schools in identifying and addressing educational problems of pupils/students in special education who attend these schools:

- special school-and-care centres: with regard to work with disabled pupils/students;
- youth education centres: with regard to work with socially maladjusted pupils/students;
- youth social therapy centres: with regard to work with pupils/students at risk of social maladjustment.

**Psychological counselling**

The school education system provides psychological counselling, which focusses on addressing learning and educational problems and on developing educational skills, to children, young people, parents and teachers. It is provided in nursery schools, schools and institutions attended by children and young people, as well as in counselling and guidance centres.

The responsibilities of psychologists in (nursery) schools and other educational institutions include in particular:

- conducting assessments and diagnostic examination for pupils/students, including the assessment of their individual developmental and educational needs and their psychological and physical abilities; this aims to identify their strengths, predispositions, interests and aptitudes or talents, and reasons behind academic failure or difficulties in functioning, including barriers and constraints which make it difficult for the pupil/student to function and participate in the life of the (nursery) school or institution;
- identifying educational problems in (nursery) schools or institutions in order to address problems which impose barriers and limit active and full participation in the life of the nursery school, school or institution;
- providing psychological and pedagogical support in forms suited to the needs that have been identified;
- implementing measures related to the prevention of addictions and other problems that children and young people are faced with;
- minimising the consequences of developmental disorders; preventing behavioural disorders; and initiating various forms of help in pupils'/students' school and out-of-school environment;
- initiating and conducting mediation and intervention in crisis situations;
- providing assistance to parents and teachers, focussing on the assessment and development of pupils'/students' individual abilities, predispositions and aptitudes or talents;
- helping teachers, class / group tutors and other specialists in:
  - the assessment of pupils'/students' individual developmental and educational needs and their psychological and physical abilities in order to identify: their strengths, predispositions, interests and aptitudes or talents; and reasons behind academic failure or difficulties in functioning, including barriers and constraints which make it difficult for the pupil/student to function and participate in the life of the (nursery) or institution;
  - providing psychological and educational support.

Nursery schools, schools or institutions are not required to employ psychologists. In consultation with the managing body, the head of a (nursery) school or institution, who is responsible for psychological and educational support, decides to employ a psychologist depending on the needs identified in this area.

Psychological counselling is also provided in counselling and guidance centres.

Psychological counselling is offered by the centres in various forms adapted to the needs of
- counselling and guidance sessions for children, young people, parents and teachers;
- individual or group therapy for children or young people;
- family therapy;
- support groups;
- mediation;
- emergency intervention;
- workshops;
- lectures and presentations;
- information and training.

**Education and career guidance**

The outline timetables for individual types of public schools specify the minimum number of hours allocated to career guidance (CG).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Outline timetable for public schools / classes:</th>
<th>Minimum number of hours for grades</th>
<th>Minimum number of CG hours in a given period of education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Primary schools, incl. special schools; except special primary schools for pupils with a moderate or severe intellectual disability</td>
<td>VII/10 VII/10</td>
<td>20 in a two-year period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Classes preparing for employment: grades VII and VIII of primary schools, incl. special schools; except special primary schools for pupils with a moderate or severe intellectual disability</td>
<td>VII/10 VII/10</td>
<td>20 in a two-year period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>General secondary schools, incl. special secondary schools for students complying with intellectual norms: disabled; socially maladjusted; and at risk of social maladjustment</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>10 in a four-year period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Technical secondary schools, incl. special technical secondary schools for students complying with intellectual norms: disabled; socially maladjusted; and at risk of social maladjustment</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>10 in a five-year period</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
An outline timetable also comprises counselling and guidance / psychological and educational support classes, including education and career planning classes. The number of hours for such classes should be suitable for pupils'/students’ needs in this area, taking into consideration classes included in pupils'/students’ individual educational-and-therapeutic programmes.

The related legislation specifies:

- curricular contents for career guidance classes;
- conditions and organisational arrangements for career guidance in schools and other educational institutions;
- the training which careers advisers should have completed to qualify for the job in schools and other educational institutions, given the role of career guidance in helping pupils/students to make education and career choices.

(Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 16 August 2018 on career guidance; Journal of Law, item 1675).

Career guidance is provided by:

- public nursery schools, preschool education classes in primary schools and alternative preschool education settings;
- public schools, except for arts schools;
- public institutions referred to in the legislation.

Career guidance involves planned and systematically undertaken activities which are aimed at supporting pupils / students / learners in the process of making conscious decisions concerning education and career.

Career guidance activities include:

- in nursery schools, preschool education classes in primary schools, and alternative preschool education settings: introductory / initial occupational orientation which is aimed introducing selected occupations to children, and stimulating and developing their interests and abilities or talents;
- in grades I to VI of primary schools: career counselling which is aimed at familiarising pupils with selected occupations, developing their positive attitude to work and education, and stimulating, identifying and developing their interests and abilities or talents;
- in grades VII and VIII of primary schools, and in post-primary schools: supporting pupils/students in the process of preparing them for conscious and independent choice of the next stage of education and occupation, while taking into consideration their interests, abilities or talents and occupational aptitude and information on the education system and the labour market.

Schools develop annual programmes for implementing their internal career guidance system.
Such a programme sets out:

- activities related to career guidance, including: topics, methods and forms of activities; timeframes for activities; and individuals responsible for each activity;
- entities with which a given school collaborates in implementing activities, while taking into consideration the needs of pupils/students/learners and parents, and local and regional activities related to career guidance.

The programme:

- is developed by a careers adviser or another teacher or teachers responsible for career guidance in a given school who are appointed by the school head;
- is approved by the school head by 30 September in each school year, after consultation with the school’s teaching council.

Based on the outline timetables, school heads establish weekly timetables for individual grades and classes or, for schools for adults offering part-time programmes, semester timetables which include:

- career guidance classes;
- counselling and guidance/psychological and educational support classes/activities, including education and career planning classes.

The statutes of a school lay down organisational arrangements for additional classes for pupils/students to boost their employability if a given school conducts such classes.

As part of counselling and guidance/psychological and education support classes/activities, primary and post-primary schools conduct education and career planning classes. They use active participation methods to support pupils/students in making education and career choices.

Education and career planning classes are also conducted in lower secondary and upper secondary schools until these types of schools are phased out.

Such classes are conducted by teachers, class/group tutors and specialists, in particular careers advisers.

The responsibilities of school careers advisers include, in particular:

- assessing regularly pupils'/students'/learners’ demand for career guidance activities;
- conducting career guidance classes;
- developing a programme for the internal career guidance system in collaboration with other teachers (including class tutors responsible for individual classes, psychologists or pedagogues), and coordinating its implementation;
- supporting teachers (including class tutors responsible for individual classes, psychologists or pedagogues) in conducting activities included in the programme;
- coordinating information and guidance activities conducted in the school, including collecting, updating and providing education- and career-related information relevant to a given level of education;

Where there is no careers adviser in a school, the responsibilities of an adviser are taken on by a teacher, including a class tutor, pedagogue or psychologist, appointed by the school head.

The responsibilities performed by careers advisers as part of counselling and guidance / psychological and educational support include:
- conducting education and career planning classes, while taking into consideration pupils’/students’ strengths, aptitudes, interests and talents as identified;
- working with other teachers to design education and career planning activities / classes and ensure the continuity of such activities / classes;
- supporting teachers, class tutors and other specialists in counselling and guidance provided.

As mentioned earlier, individual educational-and-therapeutic programmes are developed for pupils/students in special education who are disabled, socially maladjusted or at risk of social maladjustment. Educational-and-therapeutic programmes for such pupils in grades VII and VIII of the primary school or in a post-primary school should specify the type of education and career planning classes conducted as part of counselling and guidance/psychological and educational support.

In the case of pupils/students with special educational needs, in particular those who are disabled or of ill health, it is particularly important to take into consideration possible limitations related to their health when planning educational paths and choosing a career. If pupils/students have health problems and their choice of a training area is limited, as confirmed by the relevant statement from a counselling and guidance centre, they may apply for priority admission to post-primary schools at the second stage of the admission procedure.

In providing education and career guidance, schools are supported by public counselling and guidance centres, including specialised centres.

Such centres support children and young people who need guidance in education and career planning, for example, in the form of workshops, counselling and guidance sessions, lectures and presentations.

Public counselling and guidance centres support schools, teachers and specialists in planning and implementing education and career counselling and guidance tasks. Centres provide support in the following forms:

- workshops,
- advice,
- counselling and guidance sessions,
- participation in meetings between teachers and specialists, and meetings of the school’s teaching council,
- cooperation and self-study networks for teachers, class/group tutors and specialists to enable them to exchange information and experience.

Centres also offer information and training on education and career guidance to pupils/students, parents and teachers.

Within the school education system, the Centre for Education Development (CED) provides support to career guidance staff.

CED is a national-level and public in-service teacher training institution. It is supervised by the Minister of National Education.

The following career guidance responsibilities of CED should be highlighted:

- assessment of training needs of careers advisers, teachers and other staff working in educational institutions in the area of career guidance;
- in-service training for career guidance staff in the school education system;
- supporting public in-service teacher training institutions, counselling and guidance centres,
including specialised centres, education resources centres, and teachers-methodological advisers in the area of career guidance;

- development and publication of information and methodological materials, and promotion of innovative activity, including publications;
- creation of databases and educational resources, and dissemination of pedagogical information in the area of career guidance;
- collaboration with domestic and international partners in improving the quality of, and promoting, career guidance.

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