

CREATING
A CARING
SCHOOL
A School-
Based
Information
System for
Supporting
Vulnerable
Learners

Tool
2

Writers

Maryla Bialobrzeska, Christina Randell, Liora Hellmann
and Gisela Winkler

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Setting up and managing a school-based information system for supporting vulnerable learners

Introduction

A key responsibility of the principal and SMT is to set up and maintain a management information system that is able to generate accurate information about a number of matters that relate to the day to day management of a school. Without accurate information, proper planning is not possible.

Although all schools collect information on learner attendance and performance and a range of other information, it is generally sent to the district and then to the provincial education office and eventually it is used for planning at the national level. Generally, however, the school itself does not receive specific feedback on the data it submitted to the District Office – there is no feedback to help the school with its own planning and management.

Purpose

The purpose of this tool is to help you to develop a basic *school-based* data management system to inform the planning and management of appropriate care and support for vulnerable learners in your school. It is intended as a school-based system for internal school use. The tool will help you to:

1. Collect data that will assist you to identify the vulnerable learners in your school;
2. Identify the nature of their vulnerability and the type of support that is needed;
3. Analyse and use the data to help you to plan the necessary care and support interventions; and
4. Track the support intervention and the learners' progress.

What to do

- Read through the information on the table below to help you get an overview of the steps and processes involved in setting up a school-based information management system that will help you to identify and manage support for vulnerable learners.
- Use the information provided in the table to assist you in filling in the **template** that follows as the basis for setting up an information system for vulnerable learners at your school.



- Read the information and use the following templates to gather data on vulnerable learners:
 1. No. of vulnerable learners per class.
 2. Details of individual vulnerable learners.
 3. Tracking planned interventions.

These key tools will assist you to gather and manage the information necessary for a school-based information management system for vulnerable learners.

Overview of an information management system for vulnerable learners

1. Meaning of the term “vulnerable learner”?	STEP 1: What is your school’s definition of a vulnerable learner? Using the information on vulnerability provided in the tables in Guide 1, develop and agree to an appropriate definition of the term <i>vulnerable</i> .
2. Purpose of the information system	STEP 2: Why are you collecting and analyzing learner data? The main purpose is to identify vulnerable learners in order to plan relevant interventions to care for and support them.
3. Main sources of data	STEP 3: What are the main sources of data about learners? The main sources of data are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner attendance records; • Learner performance records; and • Teacher observations of learners.
4. School-based information systems and procedures	STEP 4: How is learner data collected and processed? <i>Data is collected from learner attendance records</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers complete the attendance records daily. • The attendance records are submitted weekly to the school administration person responsible for monitoring that the attendance registers are completed accurately. <i>Learner performance records</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers complete the mark schedules for each child and for the class as a whole. • The mark schedules are submitted to the staff member responsible for monitoring the mark schedules. <i>Teacher observations of learners</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make notes about learners that say, show or do things (verbal or behavioural problems) that are concerning and that may indicate that they have underlying problems. • Submit observation notes to the SBST or person who has a supervisory function and who is responsible for monitoring problem behaviours of learners in the school. <i>Any other relevant documentation or reports on the vulnerability of learners</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers or the SBST may be given information by parents or care givers about a particular learner or a note from the doctor or clinic, or a report from a previous school etc. with confidential information that may add to data already collected through attendance and /or



	<p>performance records.</p> <p>Processes and procedures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may want to use the templates provided to collate and analyse the information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Number of vulnerable learners per class ○ Details of individual vulnerable learners ○ Track the needs and support of vulnerable learners in the school • Ideally the data should be captured and collated and stored electronically. However if this is not possible, this can all be done manually. It is very important to keep a good filing system for easy reference purposes. • Once the data is captured it should be carefully analysed (on a quarterly basis). By this we mean that you need to look for patterns and/or trends in order to establish whether a learner fits the vulnerability profile. This makes it possible to extract meaningful information from the data.
<p>5. Using the data and information output</p>	<p>STEP 5: How is information that has been collected used?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All the data collected and information compiled is used by the principal/ SMT/ SBST to make decisions about the type of care and support interventions that are necessary. • Procedures must be set up to engage with the information and to draw up a suitable plan of action. • All interventions that are agreed upon and implemented need to be carefully monitored and supported by the principal and SMT.
<p>6. Roles and responsibilities</p>	<p>STEP 6: Who does what?</p> <p>Identify relevant personnel to be involved in the collection, collation, analysis and use of information about vulnerable learners. For example, you could involve the following people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representatives from the SMT or the SBST should be responsible for the overall coordination of the vulnerable learner information system • Class teachers/HODS need to be responsible for collecting data and completing an initial review of all learners in their class on a term-by-term basis • Representatives from the SMT/SBST must be responsible for following up on recommended cases from teachers, and determining whether the learners fit the vulnerability profile • Representatives from the SMT/SBST assisted by (class) teachers need to be responsible for setting up systems to track vulnerable learners • For the school-based information collection and management system to work optimally, it is very important to clarify roles and responsibilities at all levels • Develop strategies to train personnel to perform the required functions • Determine how often system reviews should take place • Establish clear timeframes for deliverables



Use this template as a basis for setting up an information system for vulnerable learners at your school.

Outline of an information system for vulnerable learners
Name of school _____
Date _____
Compiled by _____
Reviewed by _____
1. Describe what you mean by 'vulnerable learner'
2. Purpose of the information system
3. Main sources of data
<p>4. Systems and procedures</p> <p>Describe the procedures for each of the following and indicate how frequently you expect the information to be collected and analysed.</p> <p>4.1 Collect and collate data on the number of vulnerable learners per class (Template 1)</p> <p>4.2 Collate details of individual vulnerable learners (Template 2)</p> <p>4.3 Analyse and record the needs and support of vulnerable learners (Template 3)</p> <p>4.4 Use information for planning support interventions for vulnerable learners</p> <p>4.5 Monitor implementation of interventions to support vulnerable learners</p> <p>4.6 Communicate information about how the school is supporting vulnerable learners</p>



Outline of an information system for vulnerable learners	
5. Who is responsible for what?	
Activities	Name of persons responsible
<p>5.1 Maintain the following records:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Learner attendance</i> • <i>Learner performance</i> • <i>Observation of learner behaviour</i> 	
<p>5.2 Monitor the collection of the following records:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Learner attendance</i> • <i>Learner performance</i> • <i>Observation of learner behaviour</i> 	
<p>5.3 Collate and analyse information using specified templates on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Number of vulnerable learners per class</i> • <i>Details of individual vulnerable learners</i> • <i>Tracking the needs and support of vulnerable learners</i> 	
<p>5.4 Use information about vulnerable learners to plan suitable interventions</p>	
<p>5.5 Monitor the implementation of interventions to support vulnerable learners</p>	
<p>5.6 Communicate progress on supporting vulnerable learners to the school and wider community</p>	



Introduction to templates for collecting, collating, and analysing data about vulnerable learners

We have already established that there are three main sources of data:

1. Learner attendance;
2. Learner performance; and
3. Observation of learners' behaviour .

In this section we examine more closely how to analyse the data collated from these three sources.

Learner Attendance

The attendance register is the source that teachers will use to extract relevant information about vulnerable learners. Before we look at the templates that the teachers will use to record relevant information, let's find out how to analyse attendance records.

This example shows how you can establish trends about absenteeism. Here is an extract of a sample attendance register.



Creating a Caring School: Tool Series

Tool 2

Analysing Attendance Records

Grade 5

Date	Week Day	A Andrew	M Mongalo	F Kruger	H Jones	J Mphisa	C Cronje	M Molema	D Khunou	P Scher	R Rakosa	G Graham
04-Feb	M	A									Late	
05-Feb	T					A						
06-Feb	W					A						
07-Feb	T											
08-Feb	F											
11-Feb	M											
12-Feb	T											
13-Feb	W											A
14-Feb	T											A
15-Feb	F											A
18-Feb	M					A						A
19-Feb	T					A		A				A
20-Feb	W		A			A						A
21-Feb	T					A						A
22-Feb	F											A
25-Feb	M											A
26-Feb	T											A
27-Feb	W											A
28-Feb	T											A
29-Feb	F										Late	A
03-Mar	M	A										A
04-Mar	T											A
05-Mar	W					A						A
06-Mar	T					A						
07-Mar	F											
10-Mar	M								A			
11-Mar	T											
12-Mar	W											
13-Mar	T					A						
14-Mar	F											
17-Mar	M											
18-Mar	T											
19-Mar	W											
20-Mar	T											
21-Mar	F										Late	
24-Mar	M	A				A						
25-Mar	T					A						
26-Mar	W					A						
27-Mar	T					A						
28-Mar	F											
31-Mar	M							A				



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Look at the absenteeism record for each of the students listed on the register page. Here is a summary of the information we can extract:

- Learners J. Mphisa and G. Graham have been absent **for a large number of days**, suggesting that they both may have serious problems.
- G. Graham was absent for many days but **one stretch of time** – suggesting illness, or possibly family illness, for example.
- J. Mphisa is absent at regular intervals for **several days at a time** – this could, for example, mean that she is looking after a sick relative, or has to deal with some other family related problem.
- A. Andrew is always absent on the **same day** (a Monday) at **regular intervals** – about every two to three weeks. The reason for this is not easily extracted, but may be worth further investigation.
- Some **generic reasons** would need to be ruled out – such as transport problems (possible R. Rakosa), illness during winter etc.

Learner performance

The analysis of learner performance is more straightforward. Performance in all subjects needs to be extracted, and any decline or change in performance should be noted. This should include observed learner behaviour in class, which may have an impact on performance.

Teacher observation

Has the teacher noticed any of the following?

- Poor concentration in class;
- Change in behaviour in class;
- Change in attitude;
- School uniform not clean/torn etc.;
- Learner becomes withdrawn in class;
- Noticeable change in physical appearance/health; and
- Other information – such as changes in family situation etc.

This is a critical part of the process, as it will highlight some of the specific needs of the learner, and the possible support requirements.



Templates for collecting, collating, and analysing data about vulnerable learners

We start off with instructions to help you record the requisite information on the template that follows.

1. Number of vulnerable learners per class

Purpose

To identify the names and number of learners in each class in the school who can be identified as vulnerable learners so that relevant interventions can be made to support them.

Tasks

1. Each teacher has to complete the *Number of Vulnerable Learners Per Class* template every 6 months, e.g. in April and September each year.
2. The completed template is submitted to the person appointed to manage the information system.
3. The person who manages the information system is responsible for storing the completed and processed templates in a safe place where they are available when needed.
4. Management is responsible for using the information from the templates to make decisions about suitable support interventions.

Instructions for completing the template

The table below gives detailed information about how to complete the template. There is also a list of possible answers that you can use when completing the template. Select the one that best describes the number of absences, performance and observations for each learner in your class. Write the appropriate answer next to the name of the learner in each of the three categories. These are suggested answers. You can, of course, fill in any answer that you think is suitable.



Instructions for completing the *vulnerable learner per class* template

Data categories	Instructions	Possible answers
General data	<p>Teacher name: Fill in your name in full.</p> <p>Grade of class: Indicate the grade of your homeroom class.</p> <p>Date of assessment: Indicate the date of the day when you have completed the form. This date needs to be no more than 6 months from the last assessment that you did.</p> <p>Teacher signature of completion and correctness: Your signature here indicates that you have completed the form in full, and that you have handed it over to the information manager.</p> <p>Processed by (name, designation of person): This should be completed by the person who is responsible for looking further into the records of the learners that have been identified as 'potential vulnerable learner' in the "Recommendation" column.</p> <p>Learner name: Fill in the name of each learner. One learner per row.</p>	
Attendance	<p>You are asked to assess the learner's attendance. Look at the Attendance Register (or equivalent) where attendance has been recorded for the previous six months. For each learner, examine the number of absences for the six month period.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0 days absent • 1 to 4 days absent • 5 to 10 days absent • 11 to 15 days absent • more than 15 days absent • Several days absent at same time • One to two days at regular intervals • One to two days, with regular pattern • Present but continually late for school • Present but sometimes late for school
Performance	<p>You are asked to assess a learner's academic performance. Look at the mark schedules (or equivalent) where learner performance has been recorded for the previous six months. For each child, look at performance indicated for the two terms of the six month period.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved • Remained stable • Declined slightly • Declined significantly • Specific problems cited



Data categories	Instructions	Possible answers
Observation	You are asked for your overall impressions and observations regarding each learner. You can report on non-verbal and/or verbal behaviours which sometimes indicate a problem with a learner. Think about the impressions and observations you have had for each learner over a six month period.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family situation has changed • Behaviour has changed • Attitude has changed • School uniform not clean/torn etc. • Poor concentration • Physical appearance has changed • Health has changed • Learner has become withdrawn • New information - e.g. abuse etc.
Recommendation	You are asked to make a recommendation about the vulnerable status of learners. Consider the attendance, performance and behaviours of the learner in conjunction with your overall impressions and observations - and then consider whether the learner may possibly be vulnerable and in need of support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Known vulnerable • Potential vulnerable • Not vulnerable <p>These answers are shown on the template. Tick the appropriate block for each learner. You can also highlight the learners who are known to fit the <i>Known vulnerable</i> profile by colouring in the blocks. You could use a different colour for <i>Potential vulnerable</i> learners.</p>

Use the template provided below as a basis for:

1. Collecting;
2. Collating;
3. Analysing data about vulnerable learners; and
4. Using the information for planning and tracking support.



Template 1: Number of vulnerable learners per class

Page _____ of _____

Teacher Name _____

Grade _____

Date of Assessment _____

Name	Grade	Attendance	Performance	Observation	Recommendation		
					Known vulnerable	Potential vulnerable	Not vulnerable
1.							
2.							
3.							
4.							
5.							
6.							
7.							
8.							
9.							
10.							

Processed by _____ Signature _____



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2. Details of vulnerable learners

Purpose

To analyse the data collected by the class teachers to confirm which learners are vulnerable, and what their basic needs and support requirements are.

Tasks

1. For each learner highlighted by the class teacher as a known or potential vulnerable learner in the *Number of Vulnerable Learners Per Class* template, the information manager analyses relevant school records relating to attendance, performance and teacher observations. The class teacher can be involved and can offer valuable insights.
2. Make contact with parents/caregivers and other relevant people and arrange a home visit in order to obtain further information on the learner.
3. Complete the *Details of Individual Vulnerable Learners* template in which the information is recorded about the vulnerability profile of learners and their specific needs.

Instructions for completing the individual learner's template

Data categories	Instructions	Possible answers
Attendance - reasons	From the patterns/trends observed by the class teacher, analyse these trends to find out the reasons for the absenteeism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport problems • Caring for ill parent/guardian • Child physically ill • Child may have emotional problems • Child labour • Other
Performance - reasons	From the patterns/trends indicated by the class teacher, try to find out the reason why performance has changed/declined.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child unable to do homework due to a variety of reasons such as family circumstances • Child struggles to concentrate in class because he/she is malnourished • Child is often absent and so cannot keep pace with the rest of the class • Other
Staff Observations	From the observations of the teacher, highlight the most critical problems and analyse this in conjunction with the class teacher. Consider possible reasons for the observed behaviour.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child unable to do homework due to a variety of reasons such as family circumstances • Child struggles to concentrate in class because he/she is malnourished • Other



Data categories	Instructions	Possible answers
Comments	Add any additional comments	
Results of home visit	Write a summary of the key facts obtained from speaking to relevant people and conducting a home visit.	
Vulnerability profile	Based on all the information provided, what is the vulnerability profile of the learner?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One or both parents deceased • One or both parents missing • Physical or sexual abuse • Child neglect/abuse • Uncontrollable child • Street child • Abandoned child • Parents or guardian fail to maintain child • Family conflict • Primary caregiver younger than 18 • Primary caregiver older than 60 • Grants received - child support • Grant received - foster child • Grants received - care dependency • Household without regular income • Household members sick • Child disabled/health problems • Child not getting sufficient care at home • Child eats one meal or less a day • Child has emotional problems
Identified needs	What are the main needs of the learner? Indicate the needs that apply.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social services intervention • Social services grant(s) • Identity documents • Clothing/school uniform • Toiletries • Feeding scheme • Food parcels • Medical care • Medication • Psychological care • After school care • Other
Status of needs	What is the status of the identified needs? Have they been addressed yet?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not yet addressed • Addressed only somewhat to date • Currently being addressed; needs monitoring • Addressed



Template 2: Details of individual vulnerable learners

Name of Learner _____ Grade _____ Date Completed _____

Data categories	Date of Analysis (March)	Date of Analysis (September)
Attendance		
Performance		
Staff observations		
Comments		
Results of home visit		
Vulnerability profile		
Identified needs		
Status of needs		



3. Tracking the needs and support of vulnerable learners in the school

Purpose

To capture relevant information about the needs and support of all identified vulnerable learners in the school. This information can be used for planning purposes and for identifying possible support interventions.

Tasks

1. The information manager ensures that correct data is recorded on the template: tracking the needs and support of vulnerable learners in the school. Use information from the completed templates for maintaining details of vulnerable learners.
2. Analyse the needs of vulnerable learners and identify suitable support interventions. Use the Tools and Guides as a resource as they contain many ideas of care and support activities for vulnerable learners.
3. Make the information available to management for planning purposes.
4. As each intervention takes place, record the intervention and update the learners' status' of needs.
5. Update the information regularly, e.g. twice a year.

Value of this information for management

This is the key resource document to plan suitable support strategies and interventions.

The template can be used as a tracking and monitoring tool that enables management to:

- Keep an up-to-date list of the number of vulnerable learners in the school; and
- Have an overview of the needs and support requirements of vulnerable learners.

Instructions for completing the template

The information collected in the two previous templates must now be recorded in the template on the following page. This tool will help you to track the progress of all the vulnerable learners in your school.

1. Write the name of each identified vulnerable learner and their grade.
2. Describe the learner's vulnerability profile.
3. List the identified needs.
4. Briefly describe what support interventions are planned.
5. What is the status of needs at the date of completion of the information on the template:
 - Not yet addressed
 - Addressed only somewhat to date
 - Currently being addressed; needs monitoring
 - Addressed



