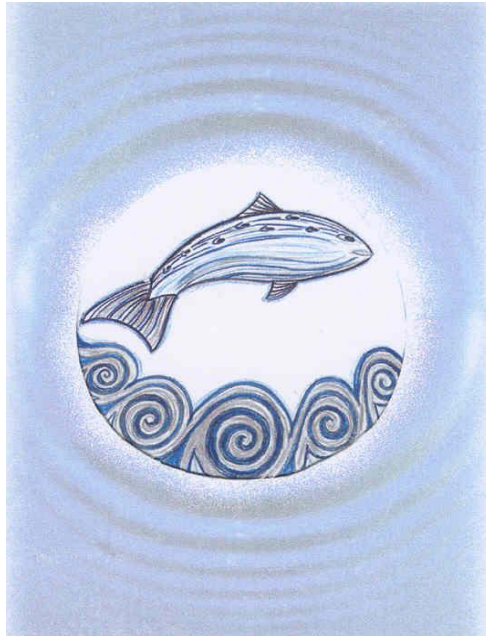


# *Blackwater Community School*



## *Guidance Plan 2023-2024*

*Our school guidance plan is a whole school plan, which endeavours to ensure that all students can avail of an appropriate guidance service tailored to suit their needs.*

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## ***Introduction***

Under the terms of the Education Act 1998, all schools are required to ‘ensure that all students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in educational and career choices’ (Section 9(c) of the Education Act 1998). Our school guidance plan is a whole school plan, which endeavours to ensure that all students can avail of an appropriate guidance service tailored to suit their needs. This plan was revised during the period September 2020 to December 2020. During this time evaluation of the student’s needs was assessed to ensure the guidance plan is current and up to date with student needs. This plan was developed through collaboration with the Principal, Deputy Principals and Guidance Counsellor and also with assistance from the School Chaplin, School Care Team and the Additional Educational Needs department. Finally, it will be reviewed on a yearly basis to ensure its nature and content are kept current for the student population of that time.

The whole school guidance plan is student-centred in its approach. The promotion and enhancement of self-esteem and life skills, the development of potential (academic, personal, social and emotional) leading to greater personal autonomy for all students are its central goal. All staff members have a vital role to play in student care, hence have a role to play in the delivery of the School Guidance Programme.

This plan forms part of the Whole School Plan, it is not a rigid template and will be evaluated, reviewed and updated routinely.

## ***Definitions***

Guidance in schools refers to a range of learning experiences provided in a developmental sequence that assist students to develop self-management skills which will lead to effective choices and decisions about their lives. It encompasses the three separate, but interlinked, areas of personal and social development, educational guidance and career guidance.

Counselling offered within a guidance context is a key part of the school guidance programme, offered on an individual or group basis as part of a developmental learning process and at moments of personal crisis. Counselling has as its objective the empowerment of students so that they can make decisions, solve problems, address behavioural issues, develop coping strategies and resolve difficulties they may be experiencing. Counselling may include personal counselling, educational counselling, career counselling or combinations of these.

## ***Requirements on Schools***

This plan is being developed in response to relevant legislation and resource documents. Guidance is a statutory requirement for schools under Section 9 (c) of the Education Act 1998: ‘to ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices’.

Other requirements and guidelines include:

- The “Guidelines for Second-Level Schools on the Implications of Section 9(c) of the Education Act 1998, relating to students “Access to Appropriate Guidance” (DES 2005) state that ‘the school’s guidance plan is a whole school responsibility’
- Planning the School Guidance Programme National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE),2004
- Guidelines for Second Level Schools on the Implications for Section 9 (c) of the Education Act 1998, relating to students” access to appropriate guidance. Inspectorate, Department of Education and Skills, 2005
- Looking at Guidance, Teaching and Learning in Post-Primary Schools Inspectorate Department of Education and Skills, 2009
- Circular 0009/2012, “Staffing arrangements in Post-Primary Schools for the 2012/13 school year” restates this position: ‘each school develops collaboratively a school guidance plan as a means of supporting the needs of its students.’ It is against this backdrop and in the context of the decision in Budget 2012 to withdraw the provision for ex-quota guidance hours to schools that this whole school guidance plan was originally prepared supported by ‘The Framework for Considering Provision of Guidance Post-Primary Schools’ issued in 2012 by ACCS, ETBI, JMB and NAPD.
- Circular Letter 0010/2017 Approved Allocation of Teaching Posts 2017/18 School Year (DES, 2017a) provides a separate guidance allocation to schools by reducing the Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR). Since 2016 Guidance has been gradually restored by way of a change to the PTR. In Blackwater Community School guidance provision has been restored gradually in that time.
- Circular 0011/2017, “Community & Comprehensive School Approved Allocation of Teaching Posts 2017/18, “The Minister requires schools to adjust their Guidance Plans to meet Action 9.1 in Action Plan for Education 2017, which states that the Guidance Plan should “include specified time allocation for guidance counsellors to

be available for one-to-one guidance counselling and time allocation for the role in supporting the organisation and work of the Student Support Team”

- NCGE, 2017, A Whole School Guidance Framework
- Circular Letter 0015/2017 Arrangements for the Implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle with particular reference to school years 2017/18 and 2018/19 (DES, 2017d) highlights that Wellbeing, a new area of learning
- ‘A Whole School Guidance Framework’ issued in 2017 by the NCGE which supports schools in the planning and provision of a whole school approach to guidance.
- Circular 0008/2018, ‘Community & Comprehensive School Approved Allocation of Teaching Posts 2018/19, “

### *Scope*

Blackwater Community School is a co-educational, multi-denominational school which caters for students of all abilities, preparing them for life. The school is an amalgamation of 3 Catholic Voluntary Schools with Mercy, Presentation and CBS traditions. There are two Guidance offices, one in the main building and one in the monastery. They are equipped with a computer, telephone and a careers library.

Guidance in second-level schools refers to a range of learning experience, provided in developmental sequences that assist students to develop self-management skills which will lead to effective choices and decisions about their lives. It encompasses the three separate, but interlinked, areas of

- Personal and Social Development
- Educational guidance
- Vocational guidance

Counselling is a key part of the school guidance programme, offered on an individual or group basis as part of a developmental learning process and at moments of personal crisis. Counselling may include personal counselling, educational counselling, career counselling or combinations of these.

The guidance plan addresses the needs of all students at all levels within the school. As guidance is a whole school concern, the plan applies to school management and staff generally.

### ***Mission statement***

At BCS we aspire to nurture the individual student to allow them to develop to his or her full potential. The guidance plan aims to assist the holistic development of all students so that their individual talents are developed and enhanced. Community involvement is encouraged and through this interaction our students learn how to respect and value others, while also making a positive contribution to society.

### ***Rationale***

The DES (2005) Guidelines state that schools should "...develop a comprehensive guidance plan as part of their overall school development plan, taking into account the needs of students, available resources and contextual factors" (DES, 2005; pg. 4).

NCGE (2004) defines the Whole School Guidance Plan as "... The document in which the school, in a systematic way, defines the guidance programme it offers, and states how resources are organised to deliver the programme." (NCGE, 2004: pg. 8).

Guidance is a whole school activity and our approach is collaboratively developed. This collaboration involves a variety of approaches such as feedback from inspection reports, parental and student attitudinal surveys or via other initiatives like the Health Promoting Schools programme. This whole School activity is undertaken as a means of supporting the needs of students. As a School we believe it is important that all members of staff fully recognise and ensure that guidance permeates every aspect of school life.

This Guidance plan has evolved for the purpose of providing guidance to students. It outlines the school's approach to guidance generally and explains how students are supported and assisted in making choices and successful transitions in the personal and social, educational and career areas. It gives formal structure to a whole-school approach to this provision. Additionally, it informs parents, students and teachers that guidance will be delivered in an integrated and proactive way. The guidance plan also distinguishes between the competencies available within the school to support a student in situations where referral to the Health services or advising parents on the need to consider individual referral to a medical professional is warranted.

## *Aims*

- To foster a sense of self within the students where they are aware of their strengths and weaknesses. By being aware of their strengths and weaknesses a student can make informed life decisions that are tailored to suit their individual needs.
- To identify and explore opportunities that may arise during their school life that may benefit them now and in the future.
- To aid each student gain the competence needed to confide in the guidance counsellor, a member of the pastoral care team or a trusted staff member.
- Finally, to assist each student in their quest for independence as this allows them to take responsibility for their own actions.

## *Objectives*

- To clarify educational, social and career goals
- To address personal issues
- To identify and explore opportunities
- To grow in independence and take responsibility for themselves
- To make informed choices about their lives and follow through on these choices
- To support the development of every student
- To acknowledge and support each person's role in the school community
- To provide an environment where each individual can develop self-esteem and a sense of personal responsibility
- To provide an environment where each individual can develop a place in society and a responsibility to society
- To nurture teaching and learning so that each individual can reach his or her full potential
- To monitor the well-being of all students
- To apply best practice in the protection of students and the promotion of their welfare, within the resources available in accordance with DES and School Child Protection Policy
- To work effectively with statutory authorities and outside agencies as and when required

- To ensure that any allegations of abuse are dealt with justly and promptly in accordance with the Children First Guidelines 2017

## **Guidance Counsellors**

Lucie Higgins & Angelina Howard

## **Timetabling and Allocation**

Angelina Howard: 22hours: Classroom guidance – 15 Class periods. Office (individual/group appointments) – 7 class periods

Lucie Higgins 22 hours per week – 10 Classroom Guidance. Office guidance (individual/group appointments) – 12 class periods.

## ***Whole School Guidance***

Whole School Guidance is delivered on a continuum of support. This is where the school is broken down into three sections; support for all, support for some and support for few. All staff involved in the education of students has a role in each stage of the continuum.

- A. **Support for all** – provided to all students to support personal & social, educational and career development and students making transitions (incoming first years, junior cycle to senior cycle and senior cycle to HEIs, FET, apprenticeships and employment). involves all of the students in the school. This is displayed through a positive classroom environment, ensuring students are aware of teacher expectations in the classroom, differentiated teaching where required and monitoring student behaviour. This is the first level of support to ensure that all students are supported throughout their school lives. Teachers will be the first line in screening students to ensure their educational and behavioural needs are being met. If there are any concerns identified the teacher can refer onto class teacher, year head, Learning Support, School Chaplain, Guidance Counsellor, Deputy Principal or Principal. Once a student is identified and a need for extra help established, the teacher has a continued role. This involves differentiated teaching methods, continued supervision of the student's progress, gathering information, interventions and monitoring the



situation. Once a student has been identified as needing extra support they move into the next category, support for some.

The guidance counsellor as the specialist has a key role to play in coordinating the planning and delivery of the whole school guidance programme and in the provision of guidance to students. A whole school approach is employed in delivering the learning and teaching activities of the school guidance programme which include, career education programmes, SPHE and Wellbeing in Junior Cycle, guidance modules and work experience/placement provided as part of senior cycle programmes (TY, LCA and LCVP).

- B. Support for Some** involves individual support educationally through Individual Education Plans (IEP'S), gathering information from parents, teachers and the students themselves, behavioural/personal support and implement agreed strategies on a one to one level and in class. Progress of the student will be monitored and reviewed so that strategies can be adapted to suit the student's needs. Some students may need further support, this is offered in the final stage, support for few.

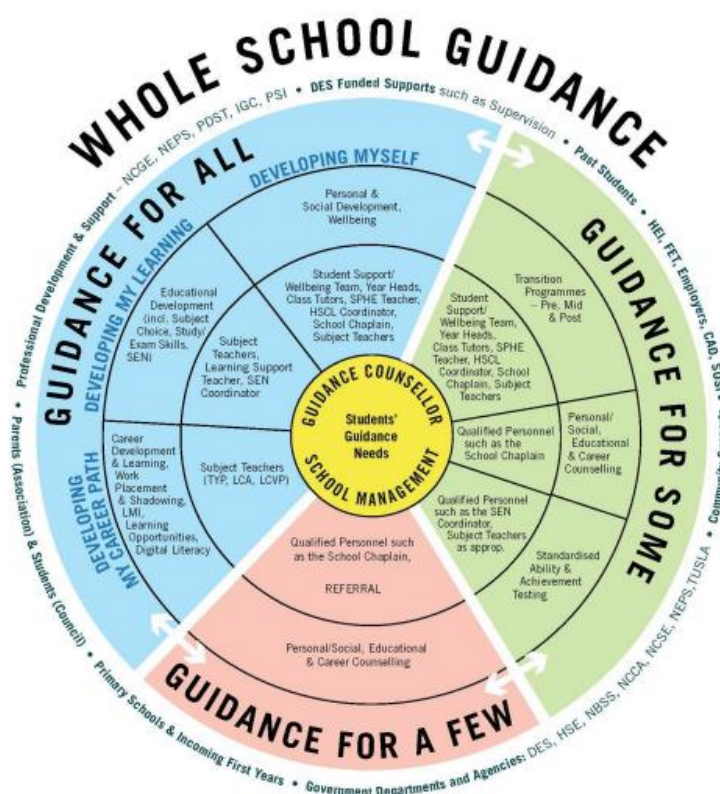
Guidance for some – provided to specific groups of students to support personal & social, educational and career development and transition making. Such groups of students will typically include, for example, students in senior cycle, especially 6th year, who will benefit from group and one-to-one guidance counselling to support educational and career decision making, and students who are making transitions. Transition points include, primary school into first year of post-primary education, junior cycle to senior cycle, and school to higher/further education and training, apprenticeships and employment. Some students may require additional and more intensive support in making transitions. Group/one-to-one guidance counselling will require the expertise of specialist school staff, such as the guidance counsellor working in collaboration with the pastoral care team, SPHE teacher, SEN Coordinator, year heads, class tutors and the school Chaplain.

- C. Support for Few;** Students may require support in meeting their developmental needs and when they experience personal crises. Some students may require more intensive support as they make transitions (eg early school leavers). Here students may be supported by internal and external personnel. Internally this support will require the expertise of specialised school staff with the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies to respond to the needs of these students and will involve the Guidance Counsellor, School Chaplain, Special Needs Co-ordinator or other school staff who have been trained in meeting the needs of vulnerable students and those who may

have additional needs. In the event that a student needs more intensive support referral to external agencies and supports should be employed. External help may be in the form of school based agencies like a NEPS psychologist, engagement with CAMHS through referral from the GP or a private counsellor. In the event of an external referral support will still be provided for the student in school.

Figure 1 below (courtesy of NCGE: A Whole School Guidance Framework, Page 14) shows the continuum of support model on which our School approach to guidance is offered. The guidance counsellor in collaboration with school management and staff, and external organisations/personnel, deliver a wide range of activities and learning to support students' personal & social, educational and career development. The guidance counsellor as the specialist plays a central role in the design and delivery of the whole school guidance programme.

Excerpt from - 'NCGE: A Whole School Guidance Framework' © National Centre for Guidance in Education 2017.



To ensure success of whole school guidance, the guidance counsellor will collaborate with subject teachers to ensure that cross curricular links are made, that all teachers are doing their

best to ensure that student well-being is to the fore and that social and emotional growth is supported. To assist in this all teachers will be made aware of the continuum of support and their role within the continuum. Collaboration between the School Guidance Counsellor, Deputy Principal, School Chaplain, Special Educational Needs Department and Pastoral Care Team are essential to ensure early intervention is made where necessary.

The organisation of the classes, where by each class has a designated teacher (tutor), further enhances whole school guidance in this school. Each class tutor meets with their class group for 5 minutes before school every morning. During this time, the role is taken, any notifications are given and the tutor has the opportunity to talk to the class about any issues arising. It also allows the student to have guaranteed contact with their tutor so that they can discuss any issues they may be having with them. In 6<sup>th</sup> year a mentoring system is in place. Teachers who sign up take 5 students each and meet with them on an ongoing basis throughout the year. We recognise that 6<sup>th</sup> year and preparing for transition out of school is a stressful time where students need more one to one attention. The mentoring programme gives them the opportunity to discuss problems arising, grades and academic progress. It also acts as screening for those students who may need additional support and move into the 'support for few' category of the continuum.

The key skills underpinning the Junior Cycle curriculum will further serve to strengthen the whole school guidance provision. Through the key skills greater emphasis will be put on students learning to manage themselves, to take care of themselves physically, emotionally and mentally and communicate appropriately while also learning to face challenges creatively, work collaboratively with others and critically analyse information to perform higher order reasoning. As we bring these ideas to the fore students will benefit as they will learn to face challenges and how to manage themselves in any situation contributing to improved wellbeing in our school.

### ***Areas of Learning and Competences***

Guidance related learning begins in early childhood and continues throughout Primary School and Post-Primary School. Students in Blackwater Community School will, as part of holistic development, be exposed to three areas of guidance-related learning that will allow them to develop in the 8 areas of competences (Figure 2 below courtesy of NGE: A Whole School Guidance Framework P. 16). These areas of learning aim to build on the areas of learning developed in primary education (see appendix 1).

## Areas of Learning

## Competences

Developing Myself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Developing &amp; maintaining self-esteem &amp; a positive self-concept</li><li>•Interacting effectively with others (face-to-face &amp; online)</li><li>•Developing &amp; growing throughout life</li></ul>
Developing My Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Employing effective personal learning/exam strategies</li><li>•Making educational choices in line with career aspirations</li></ul>
Developing My Career Path	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Using career related information &amp; sources appropriately</li><li>•Understanding the world of work &amp; life roles</li><li>•Managing career development &amp; decision making</li></ul>

These outcomes relate to the development of self-awareness and self-knowledge, knowledge of learning and work opportunities, and applying this knowledge to make effective transitions and decision making. These competencies are built upon in a variety of School programmes such as:

**Junior Cycle** - The three areas of learning and associated competences are linked with the Principles underpinning the Framework for Junior Cycle, a number of the Framework Statements of Learning and Key Skills. The whole school guidance programme is linked to Key Skills such as Managing Myself, Managing Information & Thinking, Staying Well, Communicating and Working with Others. The guidance counsellor has a role in planning, coordinating and delivering guidance-related learning associated (Guidance for All) with the relevant Key Skills and in providing more intensive interventions to those students who need it through Guidance for Some and Few approach.

**Wellbeing** - Guidance related learning is one of the main pillars of Wellbeing. Wellbeing is linked to the Staying Well key skill of the Framework for Junior Cycle. The eight competences can be linked with five of the six indicators of Wellbeing – Responsible, Connected, Resilient, Respected and Aware. The guidance counsellor has an important role in supporting planning for and delivery of the learning outcomes associated with Wellbeing indicators.

**Senior Cycle** - At senior cycle (including LC, LCA, & TY) the RE curriculum and Guidance Programmes can be used to plan learning outcomes in Developing Myself for students. All school staff involved in these programmes work together to ensure a consistent approach is taken in supporting student achievement of the learning outcomes. This collaboration also

helps to minimise any repetition/overlap in the provision of teaching and learning experiences in this area.

Staying well, is of particular interest to the provision of guidance in the school as it relates to the wellbeing of all students and staff of BCS. *Wellbeing* is present when students realise their abilities, take care of their physical wellbeing, can cope with the normal stresses of life, and have a sense of purpose and belonging to a wider community. Key points in Junior Cycle where the Guidance Counsellor could intervene to assist in the promotion of wellbeing would include the following: The transition from primary school into post primary school, subject choice, coping skills needed for their new environment as well as skills for learning. In second year students would benefit from guidance intervention through self-management and personal organisation skills, including goal setting, study skills, coping skills and reflection skills. In third year students would benefit from receiving accurate and up to date information about education and career pathways. They would also benefit from assistance in the transition into senior cycle, subject choice, as well as possible future careers. Transition year is an opportunity for reflection and learning about one's self before the leaving certificate. Along with reflection around work experience and getting to know more about themselves as an employee and what they value. This will then feed into work done in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year surrounding career decision making, managing oneself, study, goals.

Every year the school wellbeing committee organise a whole-school well-being week, this strengthens the students understanding of wellbeing and how they can promote their own wellbeing and be aware of their impact on others wellbeing. During this week the wellbeing team organised events promoting positive physical health and positive mental health. We will continue to bring this awareness of wellbeing with us throughout the the academic year. A team of teachers have also developed the Cairde system where 5<sup>th</sup> year students assist 1<sup>st</sup> years in the transition into post-primary school. They have arranged lunchtime activities to help promote friendship and in turn promote positive wellbeing among students.

### ***Pastoral Care***

The Pastoral Care team support the needs of a small number of students who are having difficulty coping with school life.

The core members of the Pastoral Care Team include:

Deputy Principal – Maria O' Brien

Guidance Counsellor –Angelina Howard & Lucie Higgins

If necessary other members of staff may be invited to the meeting provided it is in the best interests of the student being discussed. The pastoral care team are scheduled to meet once every week to review the needs of students and plan for future requirements. However, if necessary the Pastoral Care team will meet more frequently to ensure the needs of the students are being met in the best possible manner.

### ***Formal Guidance***

The formal guidance programme is delivered using two forms of intervention and various methodologies. These are mainly centred on one-to-one appointments with individual students and classroom guidance on a weekly basis or year group intervention as required.

### ***Informal Guidance***

The informal guidance programme involves liaising with teachers and management to promote cross curricular links and boost the development of a whole school policy, for example linking topics like resilience between SPHE, Religion and Careers classes or careers related learning through subject areas. Meetings and appointments with parents are encouraged, as they form a vital part of the school guidance plan.

### ***Methods of Delivery of the Guidance Programme***

1<sup>st</sup> years, 4<sup>th</sup> years, 5<sup>th</sup> years and 6<sup>th</sup> years are timetabled for one class period per week of formal guidance. The classroom guidance is delivered on a spiral approach. In 1<sup>st</sup> year the students are introduced to the world of work and the various career path available. The first term is spent helping students to settle into secondary school, with classes focusing on well-being, learning to learn and study skills. Classes then move on to look at the different career interests and the world of work. 1<sup>st</sup> year students are encouraged to research a career and present their findings to their peers. In Transition Year students are looking broadly at career sectors that are available to them, using the Reach plus book and online profile to develop their understanding of their interest areas and examining the world of work through their social placement and work experience. 5<sup>th</sup> year sees the students building on this knowledge with more detailed information on their options after second level and application procedures. Finally, in 6<sup>th</sup> year the work is focused on the students' interests and how they finalise an

individualised plan for their future endeavours. The Guidance Counsellor is a key member of the SPHE team. A careers module is delivered through all Junior Cycle SPHE classes.

### ***Administration***

All appointments are made with the guidance counsellor and the student receives a permission slip which they present to their teacher to be excused from class. Appointments are made during break. Students are not allowed to queue outside the guidance office, during class time, to confirm or wait for an appointment.

### ***Theoretical Framework***

Guidance will be offered on an individual or a group basis. The guidance programme utilises a full range of activities to address the student's needs. This incorporates the three main areas of guidance, personal, educational and vocational as set out by the NCGE.

Personal counselling provides students with a safe and supportive environment. In this environment students can explore their world, begin to overcome difficulties arising and help them achieve their full potential. When a situation arises that is beyond the competencies of the Guidance Counsellor and the Care team, a referral to the health services or advising parents to make an individual referral to a medical professional will occur.

Group counselling involves students taking on a helping role with other students under the supervision of the guidance counsellor. Group counselling may be beneficial for a group of students who share a similar issue and are comfortable together.

Educational Guidance is developmental in nature and involves empowering students in the area of subject choice, study and examination skills and involves consulting parents about related matters where necessary.

Vocational Guidance allows students to recognise their talents and abilities in relation to the world of third level college courses and employment. This also allows the student to make an informed choice and take responsibility for their own future.

### ***Target groups***

As guidance is a whole school activity it aims to reach the entire student body. They are grouped as follows:

- Incoming first years
- First years

- Second years
- Third years
- Transition years
- Fifth years
- Sixth years

### ***The Guidance Programme***

#### *Incoming First Years*

- Visit by Principal to Primary schools to speak to all 6<sup>th</sup> class students to introduce them to the school and invite them to the open night.
- Open night for parents and prospective students to show the facilities available in the school.
- Feedback is given on the assessment and individual students' needs are addressed.
- Visit by a member of school management to 6<sup>th</sup> class teachers of local feeder Primary Schools.
- Information night for parents to discuss subject choice, school ethos and transition from Primary School to Post Primary School.
- Feedback for teachers giving the profile of individual first years by Special Education Department and Guidance Counsellor.
- Involved with setting up extra educational support and learning support classes with the Special Education Department.

#### *First years*

- Introductory day – introduction to staff, school environment, distribution and explanation of timetable and lockers, introduction of pastoral care service and Guidance Counsellor/Chaplain.
- 1<sup>st</sup> year mass and information evening: A mass is held in school for 1<sup>st</sup> year students and their parents. This is followed by an information session to inform parents of the school rules/homework policy/study.
- Regular consultation with teachers to ensure all students are settled into our school
- Study skills and study timetable session with all first years prior to Christmas exams.
- One to one personal counselling when required



- Referrals from Guidance Counsellor and Learning support to external supports when required.
- Guidance is delivered on a weekly basis through Guidance classes.
- Attend parent teacher meetings
- See Appendix 2 for full list of supports in relation to transition of students from Primary School to Post Primary School.

#### Objectives:

- To manage the transition from Primary to Secondary School
- To support students throughout this transition phase
- To encourage students to find the confidence to meet with the Guidance counsellor, member of pastoral care team or teacher regarding personal or educational issues.
- To monitor all students as they progress throughout the year.

#### *Second years*

- One to one guidance upon request or referral
- Group guidance through weekly contact with students in SPHE
- Monitor educational progress and study skills sessions
- Attend parent teacher meetings
- A careers poster competition, with prizes for the winners (time permitting).

#### *Objectives*

- To monitor students' progress.
- To encourage the students to confide in the Guidance Counsellor, member of the pastoral care team or teacher regarding personal or educational issues.

#### *Third years*

- Collaborate on a regular basis with year head and class teachers.
- Offer group, individual personal or educational counselling when required.
- Attend parent teacher meetings.
- Hold a parent information session regarding subject choice for students transferring into fifth year.
- Offer individual appointments for students making their subject choice for fifth year.

- Senior cycle subject choice booklet is distributed to all students going into fifth year as well as being made available for parents.
- 5<sup>th</sup> year student representatives from choice subjects will set up information stands, all students making subject choice will be given time to discuss their options at each stand.
- Organise class discussions on study skills, timetabling and exam techniques.
- Linking in with SPHE and RE to cover decision making, conflict resolution and communication as well as developing the students' self-concept by making them more aware of their skills, interests and potential.

#### *Objectives:*

- To identify those who need help both academically and personally.
- To identify and support those who are at risk of leaving school early.
- To assist students to make the correct subject choice for senior cycle.
- To support students who are struggling with either their home or school life.
- To prepare students for their first state exam.

#### *Transition year*

- Explore the concept of work experience. Through this to allow the students to realise the depth of knowledge they gain about themselves and areas of employment they may be suited to.
- Each student will participate in group and individual projects. Some of which will be presented to the class. This serves to deepen their knowledge of the area they are researching and develop presentation skills.
- Development of occupation through exploring their past experiences and perceptions of occupations. Broadening their knowledge of careers base through use of occupations A-Z on [www.careersportal.ie](http://www.careersportal.ie).
- To explore the students multiple intelligences and help them utilise their strong features.
- Completing a cover letter, CV and interview skills. What to expect when applying for a job and when they will go on work experience.
- Introduction to qualifax, careers portal, CAO and UCAS websites.
- Hold a parent information session regarding subject choice for students transferring into fifth year.

- Offer individual appointments for students making their subject choice for fifth year.
- Senior cycle subject choice booklet is distributed to all students going into fifth year as well as being made available for parents.
- 5<sup>th</sup> year student representatives from choice subjects will set up information stands, all students making subject choice will be given time to discuss their options at each stand.

### *Objectives*

- To aid students to identify key areas of interest for occupations they never met before. Preparation for the world of work.
- To encourage students to choose suitable work experience and evaluate that experience effectively.
- To develop self-awareness of personal skills
- To enable students to make informed subject choice for senior cycle.
- To support students who are struggling with either home or school life.

### *Fifth years*

- Testing – interest inventories and personality test. This includes the Career Interest Inventory and the career interest test and personality test available on [www.careersportal.com](http://www.careersportal.com). Also Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence test.
- Each student will receive an individual appointment where the results of testing will be discussed as well as course and occupational interests.
- To inform students about the National Framework of Qualifications and where they are positioned on this as well as their opportunities to progress throughout the levels.
- The importance of setting goals, time management, study skills, styles of study and note taking.
- Allow student to become familiar with useful websites such as qualifax, careers portal, CAO and UCAS.
- By the end of the year the student should have a cover letter, CV, personal statement and career investigation completed.
- To facilitate group or individual counselling helping students with personal or educational needs.
- 1:1 careers meeting to discuss students ideas for when they leave school.

### *Objectives*

- To help each student achieve his/her full potential.
- To assist students in investigating career choices.
- To monitor all students progress both developmentally and educationally.

### *Sixth years*

- One-to-one career interviews – each student receives a minimum of 2 individual appointments to discuss their options for when they are finished post primary education.
- Study skills and goal setting to be covered a number of times throughout the year.
- Parent teacher meetings
- Information night for parents re: CAO, Post Leaving Certificate courses (FETAC) and the world of work
- Inform students about open days and upcoming events that may be beneficial for students to attend.
- On-going work with students with regard subject levels, stress, anxiety and general good physical and mental health.

### *Weekly class topics*

- ✓ Goals, study time management, note taking and study skills
- ✓ Review of subject levels and implications regarding points and entry requirements
- ✓ Applying to college in the UK (UCAS)
- ✓ Class presentations on the application process for the CAO
- ✓ Change of mind, accepting or deferring an offer from the CAO
- ✓ Post leaving certificate courses, apprenticeships and third level courses
- ✓ Research college courses using qualifax and careers portal
- ✓ Guest speakers from relevant colleges and organisations
- ✓ SUSI, HEAR and DARE
- ✓ Interview skills and CAO preparation
- ✓ Coping with change in the year ahead
- ✓ World of work – what to expect when involved in the working environment

## *Objectives*

- To aid students in their progress through the academic year
- To assist them in the decision making process
- To encourage each student to strive to fulfil his/her potential
- To prepare students for life after school
- To assist them in making career decisions

## **The Guidance Service Year Plan**

September – December

- ❖ Support students through transition phases into 1<sup>st</sup> year and into 4<sup>th</sup> /5<sup>th</sup> year and transition from second level onto work/apprenticeships/third level.
- ❖ Open night for 6<sup>th</sup> class students to view the school and its amenities
- ❖ Support around Junior Certificate Results
- ❖ Tracking of past 6<sup>th</sup> years
- ❖ Information evening for 6<sup>th</sup> year parents – CAO, FETAC, supports and the year ahead
- ❖ Attend MTU, SETU, UL & Kildalton Open Days
- ❖ Attend Apprenticeships Roadshow in SETU
- ❖ Individual appointments for 6<sup>th</sup> years
- ❖ Provide all 6<sup>th</sup> year students with a calendar of events for the year ahead
- ❖ Introduction to exam system and study for first year students
- ❖ Study skills for all classes, including organisation preparation for the year ahead
- ❖ Wellbeing week for all students with events organised for students during the week
- ❖ Support around Christmas exams 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> years in particular
- ❖ Career and college talks from visiting speakers
- ❖ Organise an information evening with the main feeder colleges for all senior cycle students
- ❖ Ensuring continued support for all students through the year
- ❖ Pastoral Care meetings on a continued basis to maintain support
- ❖ Meeting with year heads and class teachers to ensure a holistic approach in the Guidance Department

January – May

- ❖ Career and College talks from visiting speakers
- ❖ Subject choice for 1<sup>st</sup> years and 3<sup>rd</sup>/TY students – class work and subject choice booklet
- ❖ 5<sup>th</sup> year individual career appointments
- ❖ Individual/group appointments for all students undertaking subject choice
- ❖ Subject choice evenings for parents and students of 1<sup>st</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> and TY
- ❖ Well-being programme for all students from 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> year
- ❖ Post Leaving Certificate College interview support
- ❖ Continued support for all students in exam years and non-exam years in particular
- ❖ Review the Guidance service at the end of the year to ensure it is student centred and focused on the current needs of the students in the school.
- ❖ Pastoral Care meetings on a continued basis to maintain support
- ❖ Meeting with year heads and class teachers to ensure a holistic approach in the Guidance Department

All year: on-going counselling with all students including Personal, Educational, Vocational, Individual, class and group work. Liaise with NEPS, social workers and other support services. Finally, classes are provided for Transition years, 5<sup>th</sup> years and 6<sup>th</sup> years.

### ***Supporting Students with Special Needs***

The special needs and resource co-ordinator displays information on the special needs notice board in the staff room. The information entails:

- The name of resource teachers of students with special needs.
- Timetables for students with special needs.
- Details of students who have entered into the Junior Cert modified programme.
- Strategies for dealing with students that have specific learning difficulties e.g. Individual Education Plans (I.E.P's)

The special needs co-ordinator advises teachers as to which students have behaviour modification plans and special education plans in place. She does this through staff meetings,

special needs notice board and individual discussion with teachers of the student in question. In this way, teachers are made fully aware of the learning goals of individual students with education plans and therefore can plan lessons, homework, feedback and assessment accordingly. Thereafter teachers make every effort to introduce differentiated teaching methodologies, resources and assessments. Information is also provided regarding particular conditions e.g. Asthma/diabetes/ which students may have so that teachers are able to deal with these conditions in the best possible way if an incidence relating to these conditions arises in class.

### ***Literacy***

Every effort will be made by SPHE/careers teachers to develop Literacy skills within these classes by referring to Key words throughout the lesson and also making use of student's Key word journal where applicable.

### ***Numeracy***

Numeracy will be worked on in line with school development plan. Students will be shown how to calculate percentages for statistics in line with how they will be doing so in Maths. They will be made aware of where numeracy interjects this subject and their everyday awareness of their world around them.

### ***Class Organisation***

- Teachers record all Class Lists in their Teacher Journals/on VS ware.
- Teachers take a roll for each of their classes every day. This is used as a record for parent teacher meetings and to detect and monitor truancy from specific classes
- The seating arrangement is at the discretion of the teacher.
- Teachers have a common scheme of work for each of the Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle Years.
- Special Needs Assistants may accompany some students into class.

### ***Assessment***

An assessment for learning approach is used in each lesson through group work, pair work, the use of case studies and peer assessment. Students reflect on what they have learned at the

end of each module. At the end of the year the teacher will give the students an overall comment having reflected on their performance and participation in class. This comment will be included on their report card.

Careers classes are about participation. It is about helping everyone to achieve and it seeks to offer all students an opportunity for growth in their own personal development. Students are asked to complete activities in their copy or they may be provided with worksheets. Other strategies employed include; completing timetables/study plans, setting targets, answering a variety of lower and higher order open and closed questions, tick the box and matching questions, mentimeter, socrative.com, crosswords and questionnaires, quizzes, paired/group and class discussions, placemat activities, diamond 9 etc. All of which can be assessed by the teacher. Peer-assessment may take place when groups of students, facilitated by the teacher, evaluate how well they work as a team.

### ***Discipline Procedures***

As part of the BCS Code of Behaviour and Positive Discipline, students have a merit sheet for each week at the back of their Personal Record books. If students do not present homework, or the teacher deems the student's behaviour to be unsatisfactory, then an 'x' is recorded on the merit sheet, as well as in the teacher's record book. If a student does not receive any 'x's' in the week, then they will receive a 'clean sheet' sticker from their tutor. Students will be rewarded according to the number of 'clean sheets' they receive.

If students receive 3 'x's', then they will get a C3, which is also recorded on the E-Portal system. The number of 'x's' are monitored by Tutors, and C3's are monitored by Year Heads. Persistent misbehaviours are dealt with through the BCS Code of Behaviour procedures.

### ***Subject planning for a culturally diverse society***

Due to multicultural nature of our society which is reflected in the classroom, there are now a number of challenges that need to be overcome to create an effective learning environment for every student. These include aspects such as:



- Communication: it is important that language is not a barrier to learning, and not to make assumptions about a student's knowledge level because they cannot speak English clearly.
- Learning preferences: the manner in which students understand and retain information differs and their perspective also differs depending on background experience. Some students are visual learners and some are tactile learners. Bringing cultural diversity into the classroom enhances the learning opportunity of the entire class. The visual learner can benefit from maps, discussions of videos and pictures.
- Social values: values differ from culture to culture and it is important that no one person's values are disregarded.
- The teacher must realize that some students have not been exposed to people who are from different backgrounds and cultures. They may not be sure how to respond to someone who speaks differently. It also provides material for class discussions on the dangers of stereotyping people, the role of the media as it relates to culture and understanding people on an individual basis. Teachers may initiate projects connecting students with schools in other countries.

#### ***Other Guidance Service Activities:***

- Network with local Guidance Counsellors and attend 5 supervision meetings provided by the IGC
- Offer assistance with other teachers in dealing with referrals, bullying etc.
- Liaise with the year heads, class teachers and other members of staff
- Oversee the Guidance Service – telephone, emails, filing, updating the careers library
- Evaluating the Guidance Service – feedback from students and staff on the running of the Guidance service
- Maintain individual records
- Meet with parents upon request
- Keep up to date with continuous professional development

#### ***Guidance areas for development***

- Links with other staff with regard the student's needs and risks they may be under – plan to address this is to attend one year head meeting a month

- Development of new programmes to be delivered through SPHE for example stronger emphasis on LGBT in the classroom. Use of resource ‘Growing up Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender, A Resource for SPHE and RSE’ to assist in this.

### ***Links to other School Policies***

- ✓ Anti-Bullying Policy
- ✓ Code of Discipline
- ✓ Enrolment Policy
- ✓ Child Protection Policy
- ✓ S.P.H.E Policy
- ✓ R.S.E policy
- ✓ Learning Support
- ✓ SEN Whole school inclusion policy
- ✓ Wellbeing

### ***Protocol for Meetings***

#### ***1. Meetings with students***

All meetings are made by appointments. Students may make an appointment to see the guidance counsellor at any stage of the year. Self-referral is encouraged but students can be referred by others also. Our students are encouraged to speak to any member of staff they feel comfortable with from year head to class teacher. Therefore, referral can come from any member of staff. An appointment can be made during break time. Once an appointment is made the student is given an appointment slip to give to their subject teacher to ask for permission. If the student does not gain permission the appointment will be rescheduled.

#### ***2. Meetings with parents***

Parents/Guardians may make appointments with the Guidance Counsellor through the school Secretary. The Guidance Counsellor may request another member of staff to be present at the meeting, for example the year head or class teacher. The student may be invited to attend all or some of the meeting with the approval of the Parent/Guardian. Records of the meeting may be kept.

### ***3. Confidentiality***

The confidentiality rule followed is; School management, parents/guardians are informed if it is felt that the student is a danger to him/herself and/or is a danger to others or it is a legal requirement. The student is informed of the limits of confidentiality at the beginning of a session.

### ***4. Child Protection***

If a student discloses that they have been subject to any type of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse or neglect it is mandatory that this is reported to the DLP or the DDLP. If a child discloses that they have been harming themselves or are thinking of harming themselves, this is reported to the DLP or the DDLP and contact is made with the student's parents/guardians. Students are made aware at the beginning of the counselling session that there are limits to confidentiality and if they disclose that they have been harmed or are being harmed, this is a situation that would need to be taken further so as to ensure their safety. In certain instances, the advice and direction of the duty care social worker is sought and reported if necessary as per the School Safeguarding Statement. Such referrals are reported by the Principal at all Board of Management meetings. As guidance is a whole school issue, this policy recognises the responsibility of all staff to adhere to child protection procedures (2017). Staff will report their concerns about a student to the Designated Liaison Person, the Principal. In the Principal's absence the staff will report to the Deputy Designated Liaison Person, the Deputy Principal.

### ***5. Referral Procedures***

Assistance for students will be sought from other qualified professionals outside the school, for areas of concern such as learning difficulties, substance abuse or bereavement where appropriate. School personnel considers it necessary and appropriate. The Chaplain and Guidance Counsellor will supply all relevant information and seek the relevant permission from school authorities and parents or guardians. Teachers, school management and parents may refer students to the Guidance Counsellor and/or Chaplain.

*Referrals In* - Student (self-referral) / Class teacher / Year Head / Chaplain / Guidance Counsellor / Management/ Parents / Staff / Caretakers / Secretaries / Other Students / Curriculum / Piece of Writing and Emergencies

*Referrals Out* -External Counsellor/ CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services)/ Social Services / NEPS/ SENO / Túsla / Doctors/ Garda Síochana/ Disability/ Access Officers in various Institutions.

*Procedure* -Meet with Student (once-off / or contract for number of sessions /or refer on as necessary) Explain limits of confidentiality, keep counselling record, contact parents/ referral out if necessary.

#### **6. *Record keeping Procedure***

All records will be kept in accordance with the ‘Freedom of Information Act’ and the School Data Protection Policy. Detailed records may be kept from all guidance counselling meetings. Guidance records are kept for 7 years after the student has left. Notes shall be kept as brief as possible and will be completed as soon as possible after the meeting. Only facts are collected not opinions.

#### **7. *Other Agencies***

The School may enlist the help, support, advice and assistance of the following agencies and organisations as appropriate:

- NEPS Psychological Services
- Social Workers
- Doctors
- Employers
- SENO
- Túsla
- Colleges/Admission Officers and Access Officers
- Solas
- Defence Forces
- Gardaí
- Department of Education (RACE)
- State Examinations Commission (SEC)
- CAO, PLC, “HEAR” “DARE” ETB and UCAS
- CAMHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

### ***Reviewing and Evaluating the Plan***

Critical reflection and evaluation are a very important part of the School Guidance Programme. The aim of conducting a yearly review of the plan is to measure the strengths and weaknesses of the Guidance service offered to the students. It is to ensure that the students' needs are continually addressed in the service being offered. Finally, we will assess whether or not the service is delivered from a whole school perspective. Therefore, the plan will be reviewed at the end of each school year.

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- Department of Education and Skills (2014) Student Support Teams in Post-Primary Schools. A Guide to Establishing a Team or Reviewing an Existing Team.
- Department of Education and Skills (2011). Circular 0065/2011: Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, Department of Education and Skills, Dublin.
- National Educational Psychological Services (2010) A Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools: Guidelines for Teachers.
- National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) (2004), Planning the School Guidance Programme
- School Development Planning Initiative (SDPI), (2004) Planning the School Guidance Plan
- Guidelines for Second Level Schools on the Implications of Section 9( c ) of the Education Act 1998, relating to students' access to appropriate guidance. Department of Education and Science, 2005.
- Circular Letter No. PPT 12/05: Guidance Provision in Second-Level Schools.
- Circular 0003/2016 – Approved allocation of Teaching Posts 2016/2017 School Year

# *Appendix 2*

### ***Transition of Students from Primary School to Post-Primary School***

- The Principal/Deputy Principal will visit Primary Schools to invite students to the school open night and to pass on key information about the school.
- The open night is held to allow prospective students visit the school, observe the facilities available in the school and meet some of the staff.
- Application forms are handed out with the Prospectus for the school. Once these are processed the student is offered a place in the school.
- The Deputy Principal, Special Education teacher or Guidance Counsellor return to the Primary Schools to gather relevant information about the incoming first years. This is done to ensure continuity of their educational support from Primary school to Post-Primary school.
- An entrance test is used to divide students into mixed ability classes. This test is taken in March before they enter in September.
- First day of school the first years are met by the Principal, Vice Principal, Guidance Counsellor and Chaplain to welcome them to school, introduction into the rules of the school and highlight support systems available. The students then meet their class teacher and 5<sup>th</sup> year Cairde who then give them a tour of the school and begin to get to know the students. Any students with special educational needs are offered the chance to come to the school at the end of the summer holidays to have an additional induction day. An induction leaflet is given to all 1<sup>st</sup> year students.
- The first year students participate in a Cairde system with 5<sup>th</sup> year students. This allows them to get to know an older student whom they can go to for help. They are there during induction day and activities are run throughout the year to assist in the settling of the 1<sup>st</sup> year students.
- 1<sup>st</sup> year day out. The 1<sup>st</sup> years along with the 5<sup>th</sup> year cairde and their mentors will go for a day out. Location to be determined each year.
- 1<sup>st</sup> year mass celebrating their transition into Post-Primary school. The first year mass is followed by an information session. Homework, school rules, extra-curricular activities and study are covered. This also allows parents time during the first term to ask any questions they may have to ensure that their student is getting the best opportunity to settle into Post-Primary School.