

St Francis College Rochestown

Whole School Guidance Plan



Rationale of Policy

This School Guidance Policy reflects the ethos and spirit of St. Francis College Rochestown and has been devised and developed in accordance with Section 9 of the Education Act 1998. Section 9(c) of that act states that a school "shall use its available resources to ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices." Section 9(d) elaborates further by stating that a school "shall promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students ... in consultation with their parents having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school."

The ethos and spirit of St. Francis College is embodied in the school's Mission Statement, which states:

St. Francis College Rochestown, a Catholic Secondary School under the Trusteeship of the Capuchin Franciscan Order, aims to provide an environment which promotes in a harmonious manner the physical, academic, spiritual, social and moral growth of the whole person. We respect and value all of creation but particularly the dignity of each individual within the college community. We strive to fulfil this mission in a spirit of collaboration and partnership between Pupils, Parents, Teachers, Trustees, Management and the Community at large.

Definition of Guidance -What is Guidance and Counselling in schools?

Guidance and Counselling refers to a range of learning experiences provided in a developmental sequence, designed to assist students in making choices about their lives and to help students in making transitions based on these choices. The Guidelines for Second Level Schools on the Implications of Section 9(c) of the Education Act, 1998 identify Guidance and Counselling as a single process that "*aims to help students to develop an awareness and acceptance of their talents and abilities, to explore possibilities and opportunities; to grow in independence and to take responsibility for themselves, to make informed choices about their lives and to follow through on those choices.*" (Pages 4,5) These choices may be categorized into three distinct areas: (i) Personal and Social, (ii) Educational and (iii) Career. The Department of Education's guidelines state that "*counselling in schools may include personal, educational, career counselling, or combinations of these.*"

Background to Policy

A Consultative Process

Guidance is a whole school activity where each school forms a team, in which the guidance counsellor has a pivotal role, to collaboratively design and develop a whole-school Guidance plan as a means of supporting the needs of all students. It is important that all members of staff fully recognise and ensure that Guidance permeates every aspect of school life and the plan is developed in collaboration with teachers, students, parents, the Board of Management of St. Francis College and the wider school community.

This policy is not rigid but rather it reflects the uniqueness of St Francis College, as an all-boys secondary school in its own particular context and circumstances.

The development of the Whole School Guidance plan has been guided by models of good

practice in school guidance planning as outlined by the Institute of Guidance Counsellors, the National Centre for Guidance in Education and the School Development Planning Initiative.

Models of Good Practice

In the preparation for and review of this Whole School Guidance Plan, St. Francis College Rochestown has been guided by the models of good practice in school guidance planning as outlined by the Institute of Guidance Counsellors, the NCGE: A Whole School Guidance Framework, and Looking at our schools 2022: A quality Framework for Post Primary Schools. This policy has been developed within the parameters of the guidelines of:

- DES (2005) 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 Programme Recognition Framework (2016)
- Circular Letter No. PPT 12/05: Guidance Provision in Second-Level Schools
- DES Circular 0055/2019: Arrangements for the Implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle
- Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines 2021
- NCGE: A whole school guidance framework 2017
- DE: Staffing Arrangements Circulars 0022;0023;0024/2022, published April 2022 revised PTR adjustment, now full restoration, Appendix 3 Guidance

St. Francis College views this whole school policy and school guidance plan as a living evolving document and all of the stakeholders to this plan are committed to reviewing and improving this policy on a regular basis.

This whole-school Guidance plan outlines St. Francis Colleges approach to Guidance generally using the continuum of support model (all, some, few) and describes how students will be supported and assisted in making choices and successful transitions in the personal and social, educational and career areas.

Related School Policies

This Whole School Guidance Policy and St. Francis's College Guidance Programme is consistent with and supported by a range of other School Policies including ones listed below. All these policies can be viewed on our website at <https://www.stfranciscollege.ie/policies>.

- Additional Education Needs Policy
- Child Safeguarding Statement & Risk Assessment
- Code of Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Internet and Acceptable Use Policy
- School Admissions Policy
- SPHE/RSE Policy
- Suspension and Expulsion Policy
- Critical Incident Policy

- Vetting Policy

Linkages to other Programmes

St. Francis College acknowledges the relevance of and importance of SPHE and religion to the social and personal development focus of guidance and counselling. A full description and account of both SPHE and religion in St. Francis College is provided in their respective department plans. St. Francis College recognises the significant contribution that the Transition Year Programme makes in providing students with appropriate and relevant guidance-related activities. This Whole School Guidance Plan recognises the significance of cross curricular links (for example guidance and CSPE, work experience, modules, guidance and SPHE).

Objective of Policy

To ensure that the students of St. Francis College Rochestown have access to guidance, that is appropriate to their needs, stage of development, and their school programme.

Aims of Policy

1. To promote the development and growth of each student on a personal, social, spiritual, educational and career basis.
2. To ensure that guidance initiatives and programmes in St. Francis College are delivered in a developmental sequence that is relevant and appropriate to all students.
3. To provide a framework for the delivery of guidance programmes within our school and in a manner that takes account of the diverse and particular needs of students with special educational needs, students of all ability levels and students from different backgrounds and cultures, up to leaving certificate students.

Wellbeing

400 hours of wellbeing implemented in Junior Cycle in 2022/2023.

This Whole School Guidance Policy and the associated School Guidance Programmes reflect the ongoing contribution of the following individuals and groups:

- Guidance Counsellor (A detailed account of the role of the Guidance Counsellor is provided in the Guidance Department's Subject Plan)
- The Principal and Deputy Principals
- The Additional Educational Needs Team
- TY Programme Coordinator
- The Religious Education Teachers
- The PE Teachers
- The Year Heads
- The Class Teachers
- The SPHE Teachers

- The CSPE Teachers
- Subject Teachers
- Special Needs Assistants
- School Secretarial Staff
- The Caretaker and all other ancillary staff

Whole School Guidance Activities

The Guidance Team works together to provide the following formal guidance services during the school year:

- Assessment/Aptitude testing of students
- School induction and orientation for incoming first years
- Pre-Transition supports for new students
- Study Skills workshops and classes
- Information and Open Nights for parents and students
- Extra-Curricular activities
- Home-School visits
- Educational college excursions
- Visits by guest speakers
- Visits to Careers Exhibitions and College Open Days
- Engagement with student mental health programmes and support agencies.

In addition to the above formal school guidance activities, guidance and support is provided informally and on a regular basis in a variety of contexts by all staff. There are a range of other student supports within the school including the Student Council, Meitheal Team and the Board of Management.

Designing, delivering and evaluating guidance learning and developmental programmes relating to personal and social, educational and career development for individual, group and classroom settings

- Developing effective teaching, learning and assessment strategies.
- Providing individual and group counselling
- Providing labour market, learning and career-related information through Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and blended learning
- Planning and organising workplace learning and establishing links with the wider business community, agencies and voluntary sector
 - Using psychometric tests(i.e. ability and aptitude tests and career interest inventories) to facilitate career decision-making and personal development, and to support learning and educational choices
 - Providing support to, and working in collaboration with, school management and staff in the planning, leading, delivery, review and evaluation of the guidance service/programme and the whole school guidance plan
 - Working with parents (as appropriate)
 - Referring students and service users to external agencies and professionals, as appropriate
 - Establishing close ties with feeder schools, where appropriate, and with centres of

further education and training and higher education

Guidance Provision

St. Francis College Rochestown is committed to employing a team approach in the provision of a range of learning experiences and developmental opportunities to all students. These experiences and opportunities, which will be appropriate and relevant to student needs, shall enable the growth and development of all students and shall assist students in making choices and transitions e.g. transitions from Primary to Secondary school, from Junior Cycle to Senior Cycle, from school to Further Education and the world of work).

Guidance counselling in post primary schools is holistic and may include personal counselling, educational counselling, career counselling or combinations of these and '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.' (Department of Education and Science, 2005; pg. 4)

A number of mechanisms are used in order to assist students in making choices.

These include:

1. **Assessment:** The Guidance Counsellor, the AEN Co-Ordinator and other associated staff members carry out assessments such as the C.A.T 4, Career Interest Tests (careers portal) and other suitable testing instruments.
2. **Educational Skills:** Junior Cert, and Leaving Cert, students are given instruction on Study Skills and examination techniques in 3rd Year and 6th Year respectively.
3. Students are provided with information in 3rd Year that helps them to make decisions on subject choice and subject level for the Leaving Certificate, which is appropriate to each student's aptitude and interests, and which is cognisant of student's career aspirations. After school study is also available.
4. **Vocational Guidance Interviews:** The Guidance Counsellor holds interviews with 3rd years (on request) to facilitate subject choice at senior cycle if required. Vocational guidance is also provided to 5th Years on request and all 6th Year Students to assist them in identifying third level courses and career areas that correspond to their interests and aptitudes.
5. **Counselling:** Students are referred for counselling to the Guidance Counsellor by the Student Support Team, School Management, parents and members of staff. A student may also self-refer themselves for counselling, which can assist students to explore their feelings and to cope with challenges and problems. Students can be referred to outside agencies such as their GP, NEPS, Pieta House, Jigsaw and private therapists for support as required.
6. **Information:** Students are provided with information on external agencies and supports where necessary by all relevant staff.
7. **Onward Referral Service:** The individual student is referred, where it is deemed

necessary by the student support team to external individuals/agencies. Examples include: General Practitioners, The HSE Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Tusla, Pieta House, The National Educational Psychological Service, psychologists.

PLEASE NOTE: An appointment system operates for all personal counselling, careers counselling and vocational guidance interviews. The appointments system helps to minimise disruption to classes and the co-operation of teachers in facilitating time for guidance and counselling appointments is greatly appreciated. However, students in need of urgent counselling will be seen on demand.

The Student Support Team is made up of the following:

- Principal
- Deputy Principals
- Additional Educational Needs Co-ordinator
- Guidance Counsellors
- Special Needs Assistants
- Year Heads

Regular meetings are held between various members of the Student Support Team and with parents/guardians as necessary.

Resources and Supports:

- Department of Education and Science Resources
- IGC Website
- School Funds as resources allow
- Careers Portal and classroom guidance/career news, Synergy Webinars
- CPD

Links with external agencies

- Links with the community and with other agencies and groups that support students and parents
- Links with 3rd Level Colleges (Admissions, Access Officers, School Liaison Officers), SOLAS, Further Education and Training Boards.
- Links with Business and Industry - Work Experience etc.

Monitoring of the Guidance Policy/Guidance Plan

The School Management, in consultation with the Guidance Counsellor and the School Guidance Team will monitor the implementation of the Guidance Policy and its associated Guidance Programmes.

Evaluation and Development of Guidance Policy

This School Guidance Policy will be subject to ongoing evaluation. We are committed to this through consulting with parents, staff and students.

St. Francis Colleges evaluation of the policy will be guided by the following questions:

- Is the guidance plan working?
- Are the guidance programmes being provided in the most effective manner?
- Are all students being provided with appropriate guidance?
- What areas of the Guidance Plan/Guidance Policy require modification and improvement?
- What are the areas that need to be developed in terms of guidance provision and programme delivery?

The guidance team and the school community more generally have an important role to play in the evolution and development of the Guidance Policy. The Whole School Guidance Planning Group welcomes contributions and feedback from the entire school community and from all other stakeholders in relation to guidance

Whole School Guidance

The whole-school 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.

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

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.

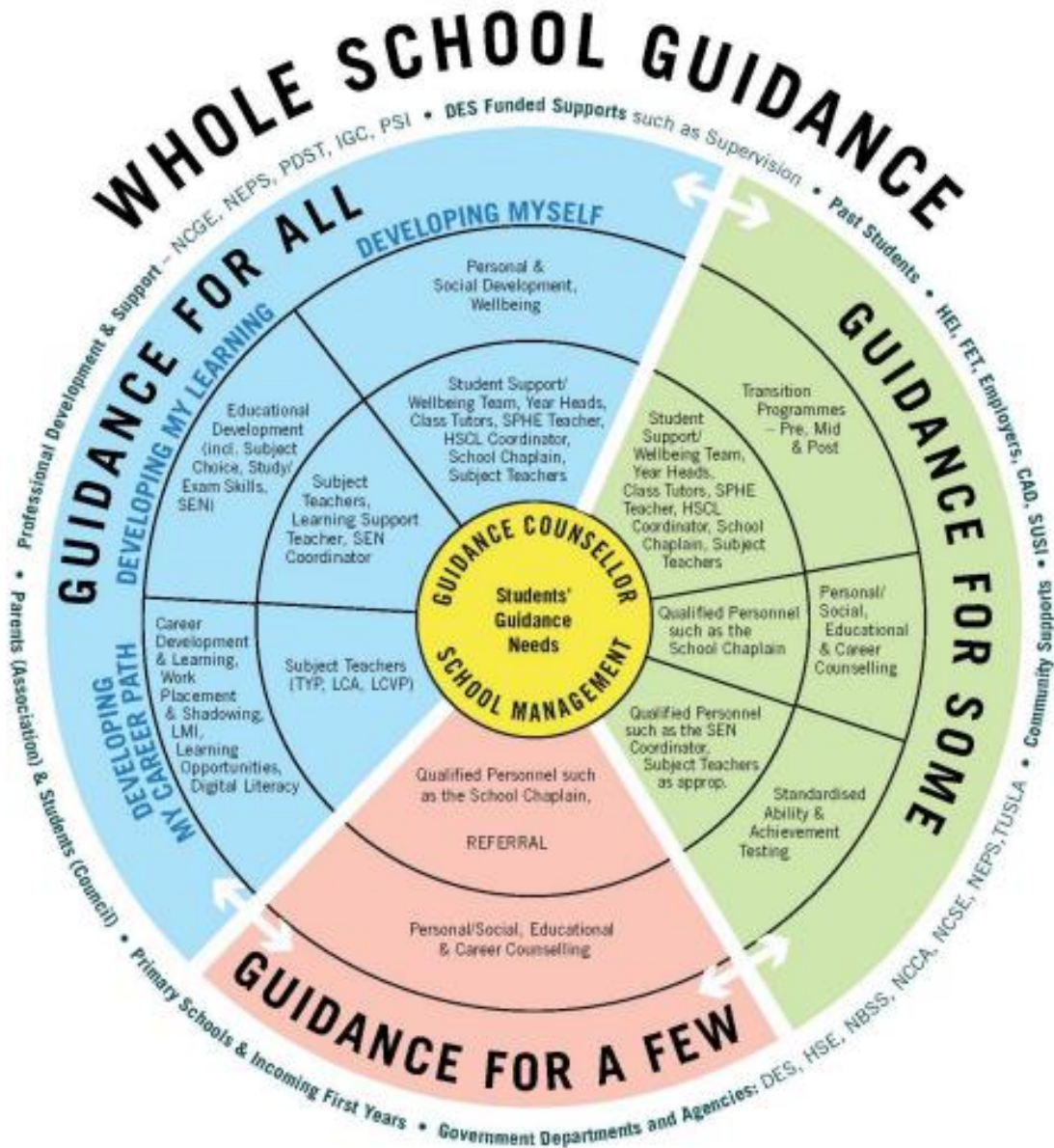
Guidance for some – provided to specific groups of students to support personal & social, educational and career development and transition making. Such groups of students will typically include, for example, students in senior cycle, especially 6th year, who will benefit from group and one-to-one guidance 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 in collaboration with the pastoral care team, SPHE teacher, AEN 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 (e.g., 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 Principals, Additional Educational Needs Department and Year Heads are essential to ensure early intervention is made where necessary.

Each class has a designated teacher (class teacher) who teaches the class group for at least one class period a week. This allows class teachers the opportunity to talk to the class about any issues arising or difficulties they may be having. It allows the student to have guaranteed contact with their class teacher should they need to discuss any problems they may have.

In 5th year a mentoring system is in place called the Meitheal program supporting first years.

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 St. Francis College 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

- Developing & maintaining self-esteem & a positive self-concept
- Interacting effectively with others (face-to-face & online)
- Developing & growing throughout life

Developing My Learning

- Employing effective personal learning/exam strategies
- Making educational choices in line with career aspirations

Developing My Career Path

- Using career related information & sources appropriately
- Understanding the world of work & life roles
- Managing career development & decision making

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 - SPHE and guidance related learning are two 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 & 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 St Francis College Rochestown. *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 5th and 6th year surrounding career decision making, managing oneself, study, goals.

On a whole-school level ,Wellbeing week 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, spiritual and mental health. We will continue to bring this awareness of wellbeing with us throughout the remainder of the academic year

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

The wellbeing programme can include guidance education (Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines, 2021 p43 &46) * Guidance education must be included in the school's junior cycle programme. The Framework for Junior Cycle(2015) states that guidance provision may be included in the hours available for Wellbeing 'in recognition of the unique contribution that guidance can make to the promotion of students' wellbeing'. * Link to Circular oo59/2021

Incoming First Years

- Visit by Principal to Primary schools to speak to all 6th 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 CATS assessment and individual students' needs are addressed.
- Visit/ Contact by a member of the Student Support Team to 6th 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.
- 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.
- 1st year information evening to inform parents of the school rules/homework policy/study, AUP and other school policies.

- Regular consultation with teachers to ensure all students are settled into our school
- 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 SPHE
- Parent/Teacher meetings

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 Student Support 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
- Sport day, Tours, represented on the student council
- Attend parent teacher meetings

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 fourth year.

- Senior cycle subject choice information is distributed to all students going into fourth year as well as being made available for parents.
- 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

- Group guidance through weekly contact with students in TY Skills
- Explore the concept of work experience. This allows 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 through use of occupations A-Z on www.careersportal.ie.
- Completing a cover letter, CV and interview skills. What to expect when applying for a job and when they will go on work experience.
- CAT assessments carried out in TY and feedback given on results.

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 support students who are struggling with either home or school life.

Fifth years

- Testing – interest inventories and personality tests. This includes the Career Interest Inventory and the career interest test and personality test available on www.careersportal.com. Also Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence test.
- 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.

Objectives

- To help each student achieve their 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 1 individual appointment to discuss their options for when they are finished post primary education.
- Study skills and goal setting to be covered throughout the year.
- Students have access to Studyclix
- 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.

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

Supporting Students with AEN

The special needs and resource co-ordinator provides information on individual students with AEN via VS Ware and Microsoft teacher SharePoint. The information entails:

- ◆ The name of resource teachers of students with special needs.
- ◆ Timetables for students with special needs.
- ◆ Details of all students who have applied for RACE.
- ◆ Strategies for dealing with students that have specific learning difficulties e.g. Individual Education Plans (I.E.P's)

The AEN co-ordinator and team advise teachers as to which students have behaviour modification plans and special education plans in place. This is done through staff meetings, VS Ware, 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 which students may have so that teachers are able to deal with these conditions in the best possible way if an incident relating to these conditions arises in class.

Guidance Teaching and Learning

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 Careers Portal textbooks, 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, crosswords and questionnaires, quizzes, paired/group and class discussions. Sometimes the completion of the above assessments remains private. Peer-assessment may take place when groups of students, facilitated by the teacher, evaluate how well they work as a team.

Testing:

CATs for Guidance is used in fourth year to assist students in career decision making. This test assesses students in the following areas: verbal reasoning, numerical ability, abstract reasoning, perceptual speed and accuracy, mechanical reasoning, space relations, spelling and language usage. This test can point students in a career direction and help them to see areas of strengths. We use this test in conjunction with interest profiler and personality profiler on careers portal to give a wider picture. It is strongly advised that students do not rely on the results of one test and ensure that they are using the results together with their learning from work experiences, leaving certificate subjects and their interests.

CAT4 level E is used for incoming 1st year students for the purpose of screening for any learning

difficulties, to aid in allocating students to mixed ability classes and to help teachers understand a students' base level and where they can help them to improve.

Other Guidance Service Activities:

- Network with local Guidance Counsellors and attend 5 supervision meetings provided by the IGC
- Offer assistance to other staff members in dealing with referrals, bullying etc.
- Liaise with the year heads, class teachers and other members of staff
- Maintain individual records
- Meet with parents upon request
- Keep up to date with continuous professional development

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. 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 student is informed of the limits of confidentiality at the beginning of a session. If it is felt

it is in the students' best interest to inform management/parents/guardians of a particular difficulty, it is only done with the knowledge and ideally the agreement of the student. 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 guidelines. 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.

4. 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 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.

Referrals In - Student (self-referral) / Class teacher / Year Head / Guidance Counsellor / Management/ Parents / Staff / Caretakers / Secretaries / Other Students / Curriculum / 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.

5. 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.

6. *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
- Túsła
- PIETA House
- Jigsaw
- Cork Arc
- Colleges/Admission Officers and Access Officers
- Solas
- Defence Forces
- Gardaí
- Department of Education (RACE)
- State Examinations Commission (SEC)
- CAO, PLC, “HEAR” “DARE” CETB and UCAS
- CAMHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

Guidance Counsellors Career Development and Development Goals

To maintain qualified membership of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC) the Guidance Counsellor will undertake 10 hours of continuous professional development each year.

- Attendance at counselling supervision and branch meetings.
- Attendance at the CAO conference and annual Guidance Counsellors Conference

Development goals

The Guidance department plans to expand the school website to enable the wider community

to access relevant information and resources relating to both Career Guidance and personal counselling. This will be of specific relevance to pupils and Parents / Guardians of St Francis College Rochestown

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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Policy adopted by the Board of Management on 12 October 2023.