

Whole School Guidance Plan 2021-2022



Our school Vision

Synges Street is an all-boys ERST secondary school. A vibrant community embracing diversity and inclusivity among staff, students and parents.

- All individuals are valued and supported by an energetic and dedicated staff.
- Synges Street School is a community where student, parent and staff voices are heard and listened to.
- We aim to build on academic achievement through the use of informed teaching methodologies and practices, providing students with the opportunity to become leaders of their own learning.

The motto of our school is *Viriliter Age*: Act Courageously. This reflects our school's commitment to being respectful, being responsible and being ready.

Our School

CBS Synge Street is a voluntary secondary school for boys. Located in Dublin's South Inner City, we currently have enrolment of over 280 students.

Rationale

Guidance is a universal entitlement for all students in post primary schools as per the Education Act (1998). This act also requires schools to provide students with "appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices" (section 9c). The Education Act also requires schools to prepare a school plan (section 21).

Scope

The Guidance Plan involves all aspects of school life as such it is a whole school activity. While the Guidance Counsellor has the overall responsibility for coordinating and compiling the plan all members of staff have a contribution to make.

The Guidance Counsellor is a member of the school educational team and as such works with various members of that team to provide students with the best possible service.

Members of this team include, among others:

A core team consisting of: Clare Catterson (Principal), Lesley Plunkett (Deputy Principal), Sarah Eastman (Guidance Counsellor), Stephanie O'Sullivan (SEN Coordinator), Erica Butler (School Completion Programme Coordinator), Daragh Martin (Behaviour For Learning Teacher) and Maria Wright (Programmes Coordinator). This Core team is further supported by:

- Student Support Coordinators
- Subject Teachers and Departments
- Special Needs Assistants
- Parents
- School support personnel

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Section A: Statement of Guidance Policy

School Vision

Synge Street is an all-boys ERST secondary school. A vibrant community embracing diversity and inclusivity among staff, students and parents.

- All individuals are valued and supported by an energetic and dedicated staff.
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- We aim to build on academic achievement through the use of informed teaching methodologies and practices, providing students with the opportunity to become leaders of their own learning.

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What is Guidance in Schools?

Guidance refers to a range of learning experiences provided in a developmental sequence designed to assist students to make choices about their lives and to make transitions to these choices. These choices may be categorized into three distinct, but interlinked areas:

- Personal and social
- Educational
- Career

Guidance activities that assist students to make informed choices include:

- Personal counselling
- Assessment using psychometric instruments and inventories
- Career information
- Interviews
- Attendance at career events
- Use of information technology e.g. Careers Portal
- Personal and social developmental programmes

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 Aims of the Guidance Counselling Service

The Guidance Counselling Service is seen as having a central role in the continuous development of each individual student.

The Guidance Counsellor relates to school management through meeting the Principal and Deputy Principal on matters affecting the planning of the school's provision of personal, career and educational counselling; as well as on matters affecting individual students requiring intervention. The Guidance Counsellor also liaises with Year Heads, Learning Support teachers, Subject teachers and parents as appropriate.

Guidance

- To deal with all students in an eclectic and multicultural manner in order to aid them in developing their full potential.
- To provide a framework for the delivery of the school's guidance programme.
- To ensure a structured response to student's personal, social, educational and career guidance needs
- To ensure that the plan is inclusive; providing for the junior, senior, minority, and special education needs of all students.
- The plan will include all guidance activities: career classes, career guidance interviews, attendance at career exhibitions, open days, meeting with management, and support agencies.
- To provide a caring and supportive service, this would be threefold:

1. Personal and Social

2. Educational

3. Career

1. Personal and Social

This encompasses developmental skills crucial to the students' education and careers e.g. Self-awareness, decision making skills, planning, coping strategies.

2. Educational

This is developmental and would include such areas as subject / course choices, subject level, motivation and learning, study skills, learning related problems, psychometric testing.

3. Career

This encompasses areas such as employment rights and duties, job opportunities, vocational education and training, further education, job and interview preparation, career research and career / course information.

Counselling

To provide a counselling environment which is both caring and non-judgemental, on a one to one or group basis. This service is to help students bring about meaningful changes in their lives, in areas such as **Decision making** and **Problem solving**.

This counselling service is aimed at facilitating individual students in a holistic manner to realistically appraise their abilities, interests and aptitudes in order to make appropriate life choices and to achieve personal happiness.

Objectives:

- To develop awareness and acceptance of their talents and abilities
- 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.

Ethical Considerations and Accountability

This policy statement will be the basis on which a regular review and evaluation of the Counselling Service will be conducted by the Whole School Guidance Plan team. The Guidance Counselling service is subject to all relevant legal requirements, to the provisions of the 1998 Education Act, to Department of Education and Skills Directives, to the school's ethos. Guidance Counsellors operate according to the Ethical Principles and Professional Practices as laid out by The Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC) Code of Ethics.

The Guidance Counsellor like all other members of staff in the school is entrusted with the care of their students in "loco parentis" and accepts the responsibilities of this position, always keeping the student's welfare to the forefront. The Guidance Counsellor is constantly aware of her responsibility to the student, to the school, to her own profession, to herself and to the implementation of this policy. The Guidance Counsellor will take part in professional peer supervision provided by the IGC, which will provide support and feedback for student professional welfare.

Section B: Guidance Programme

Current Guidance Programme

The Guidance curriculum may be divided into two components:

- Formal
- Informal

Formal Guidance

The formal Guidance curriculum is delivered using three forms of interventions employing a number of methodologies:

1. Individual contact of a personal, counselling nature and careers Guidance.
2. Classroom Guidance delivered in regular weekly classes to senior cycle students.
3. Guidance Related Learning lessons delivered through SPHE and Wellbeing classes to junior cycle students.

Informal Guidance

The informal Guidance programme consists of liaising with other teaching staff/management to promote cross curricular links and to enhance the development of a Whole School Guidance Plan in relation to the delivery of the Guidance Plan. Meetings with parents/guardians form an integral part of informal Guidance.

Junior Cycle

'The Framework for Junior Cycle (2015) provides for a new area of learning at junior cycle called Wellbeing. Wellbeing will cross the three years of junior cycle and build on substantial work already taking place in schools in support of students' wellbeing.'

'The introduction of Wellbeing into the Junior Certificate in September 2017 recognises the association between the quality of relationships between teachers and students and a number of student outcomes, including socio-emotional wellbeing, engagement in schoolwork, feeling a sense of belonging in school, levels of disciplinary problems, and academic achievement. The focus is on the role of the school guidance programme in supporting the wellbeing of all students in junior cycle.'

NCCA (2017) Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines, www.ncca.ie

Wellbeing - September 2021-June 2022

Synge Street CBS is prepared to meet the Wellbeing needs of the students by providing a cohesive Wellbeing program.

Junior Cycle Wellbeing consists of:

1st Year

1x SPHE/week

1x CSPE/week

1x Wellbeing/week

2x PE/week

1x Digital Literacy/week

2nd Year

1x SPHE/week

1x CSPE/week

1x Wellbeing/week

2x PE/week

3rd Year

1x SPHE/week

1x CSPE/week

1x Wellbeing/week

2x PE/week

Within the Junior Cycle Wellbeing program there exists relevant Guidance Related Learning in each of the years to be delivered at pertinent points during the school year.

Guidance Provision for First Year Students:

- **Annual Open Afternoon:** This allows potential students the opportunity to look around and experience the atmosphere of the school. Teachers and students are available to answer questions and give information regarding subjects and supports.
- Incoming First Years sit an **entrance test** in February. This is a useful indicator of a student's ability and identifies high achievers as well as those who may require additional support.
- The Special Educational Needs (SEN) coordinator **visits all the feeder primary schools** for an information-sharing session to help with the transition to secondary school.
- **Incoming First Years with SEN**, or those who are particularly anxious, can have tours of the school as arranged by parents.
- **First Year Induction** occurs on the first day of term. Students meet with their Student Support Coordinator in the morning and tour the school in small groups. They meet with other staff and participate in a number of activities which help them to prepare for the start of regular classes and to get to know one another in the group. School procedures are emphasized and practiced during induction.
- All classes have one period of **Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)/ Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)** per week.
- All classes have a double **Physical Education (PE)** per week.
- All classes have one class period of **Civic, Social, and Political Education (CSPE)** per week
- Students participate in **Learning to Learn Week**.
- Students are encouraged to become active members of the school community through the range of **extracurricular activities**.
- A **school trip** is scheduled early in the school year to promote bonding and team work among the first year cohort.
- **Parent teacher meetings** for first years are scheduled.
- **Learning or emotional issues** which arise are dealt with through the Student Support Coordinator and the Care Team.

- The **Student Support Coordinator liaises** with parents, subject teachers and the Guidance Counsellor to address any issues of concern.
- Students can avail of **counselling** with the Guidance Counsellor by referral from a teacher, parent or by self-referral.
- **Referrals** to outside agencies are made when particular issues are beyond the school resources and expertise.
- **The Behaviour for Learning** teacher runs interventions on an individual and small group basis with students deemed to benefit from them.
- **Regular assemblies** are conducted to reinforce positive behaviour, to provide positive feedback to year groups and highlight all the activities which take place for that year group.
- **Anti-bullying surveys** are conducted both to prevent and to investigate bullying occurrences.
- **PASS** surveys are conducted twice during the year to assess student's experience of inclusion in the school.
- **Mental Health Week** involves activities organised and speakers invited in to promote mental health awareness and wellbeing.
- **International Day** is an opportunity to give recognition to the many different nationalities that are represented at CBS Synge Street. This is a chance to show that we are school which values inclusion and diversity and welcomes all students equally.
- As a link school for TUDublin, their **Access** office invites students to take part in many activities to promote college awareness at Junior Cycle and to build links with TUDublin.

Guidance Provision for Second Year Students

- Second year students are encouraged to become **autonomous members** of the school community
- Students are encouraged to become active members of the school community through the range of **extracurricular activities**.
- Students participate in **Learning to Learn Week**.
- All classes have one period of **SPHE/RSE** per week.
- All classes have a double period of **PE** per week.
- All classes have one class period of **CSPE** per week.
- The **FRIENDS** programme is delivered in whole class groups across the year cohort.
- **Learning or emotional issues** which arise are dealt with through the Student Support Coordinator and the Care Team.
- **Parent teacher meetings** for second years are scheduled.
- The **Student Support Coordinator liaises** with parents, subject teachers and the Guidance Counsellor to address any issues of concern.
- Students can avail of **counselling** with the Guidance Counsellor and parents and the Guidance Counsellor on request. These can be in relation to personal, educational or career matters.

- **Referrals** to outside agencies are made when particular issues are beyond the school resources and expertise.
- The **Behaviour for Learning** teacher runs interventions on an individual and small group basis with students deemed to benefit from them.
- **Regular assemblies** are conducted to reinforce positive behaviour, to provide positive feedback to year groups and highlight all the activities which take place for that year group.
- **Anti-bullying surveys** are conducted both to prevent and to investigate bullying occurrences.
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Guidance Provision for Third Year Students

- Students are encouraged to remain **active members** of the school community.
- A strong emphasis is put on academic achievement and on reaching one's **potential**.
- Students are encouraged to become active members of the school community through the range of **extracurricular activities**.
- Students participate in **Learning to Learn Week**.
- All classes have one period of **SPHE/RSE** per week.
- All classes have a double period of **PE** per week.
- All classes have one class period of **CSPE** per week.
- **Learning or emotional issues** which arise are dealt with through the Student Support Coordinator and the Care Team.
- **Parent teacher meetings** for second years are scheduled.
- The **Student Support Coordinator liaises** with parents, subject teachers and the Guidance Counsellor to address any issues of concern.
- Students can avail of **counselling** with the Guidance Counsellor and parents and the Guidance Counsellor on request. These can be in relation to personal, educational or career matters.

- **Referrals** to outside agencies are made when particular issues are beyond the school resources and expertise.
- The **Behaviour for Learning** teacher runs interventions on an individual and small group basis with students deemed to benefit from them.
- Junior Cert Examination **Special Accommodations** are processed by the SEN department.
- Third year students are introduced to the **Senior Cycle programme** and **subject options**. These include Transition Year (TY), and the Leaving Certificate (LC). Presentations regarding the programmes and subjects take place with the students as well as a **LC subject research workshop** for all third year students. Subject teachers provide information on their subjects.
- Whole class group sessions with the **Guidance Counsellor** are provided to discuss various options and to answer questions. Follow up appointments may be made at this point.
- A **Parents presentation** is provided regarding Senior Cycle options.
- Students have a **choice** either to go into fifth year or to apply for Transition Year. For those who wish to go into TY the process is decided by an application and interview process.
- **Regular assemblies** are conducted to reinforce positive behaviour, to provide positive feedback to year groups and highlight all the activities which take place for that year group.
- **Anti-bullying surveys** are conducted both to prevent and to investigate bullying occurrences.
- **PASS** surveys are conducted twice during the year to assess student's experience of inclusion in the school.
- **Mental Health Week** involves activities organised and speakers invited in to promote mental health awareness and wellbeing.

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Senior Cycle

The aims of the Guidance Counselling programme are:

- To help students to develop an awareness of their talents and abilities
- To explore possibilities and opportunities open to them
- To grow in independence and to take responsibility for themselves
- To make informed choices about their lives and to follow through on these choices.

The Guidance Counselling programme at senior cycle aims to assist in the full development of each student's potential, to help students grow in self-knowledge and self-esteem and to prepare him for higher or further education, training and/or employment.

In addition to meeting the Wellbeing needs of Junior Cycle students, the Wellbeing programme at CBS Synge Street is continued throughout Senior Cycle.

Senior Cycle Wellbeing and Guidance provision consists of:

TY	5th Year	6th Year
1x Wellbeing/week	1x Wellbeing/week	1x Wellbeing/week
1x Guidance/week	1x Guidance/week	1x Guidance/week
2x PE/week	2x PE/week	2x PE/week

Within the Senior Cycle Wellbeing programme there exists the Relationships and Sexuality Education modules.

Objectives:

Guidance Counselling should endeavor to provide students with opportunities to:

- Prepare to manage their successful transition from second level to further or higher education, training, or employment
- Identify their own key motivating factors
- Prepare for the successful transition to adulthood
- Learn about jobs search and job retention skills
- Develop research and Information Technology skills so that they can be self-directed in their career exploration and development
- Learn about the world of work, including employment rights and responsibilities
- Develop skills to become independent and self-motivated learners.

Guidance Provision for Transition Year Students

To assist students in making the transition from Junior Certificate to Leaving Certificate, the following is in place. It is a sample of the many and varied activities which our students are actively encouraged to engage with throughout the year:

- TY induction day
- Bonding trip in the autumn
- Student Support Coordinator
- Work Experience
- Portfolio of learning
- Report at the end of the year
- Graduation and exhibition of work
- Leaving Certificate subject information day
- Subject tasters in class
- Wellbeing class
- Career Guidance class
- Work Safety programme
- CV and cover letters
- TUDublin Access activities
- Junior Achievement Career Success programme
- Interview skills and mock interviews
- Business- enterprise and mini-company
- Educational visits
- Community Care placements
- SUAS maths and literacy mentoring in primary schools
- Build a Bank
- Numerous guest speakers on topics deemed suited to the group.

As with other year groups:

- All classes have a double period of PE per week.
 - **Regular assemblies** are conducted to reinforce positive behaviour, to provide positive feedback to year groups and highlight all the activities which take place for that year group.
 - Students participate in **Learning to Learn Week**.
 - **Learning or emotional issues** which arise are dealt with through the Student Support Coordinator and the Care Team.
 - **Parent teacher meetings** for transition years are scheduled.
-
- The **Student Support Coordinator liaises** with parents, subject teachers and the Guidance Counsellor to address any issues of concern.

- Students can avail of **counselling** with the Guidance Counsellor and parents and the Guidance Counsellor on request. These can be in relation to personal, educational or career matters.
- **Referrals** to outside agencies are made when particular issues are beyond the school resources and expertise.
- The **Behaviour for Learning** teacher runs interventions on an individual and small group basis with students deemed to benefit from them.
- **Anti-bullying surveys** are conducted both to prevent and to investigate bullying occurrences.
- **Mental Health Week** involves activities organised and speakers invited in to promote mental health awareness and wellbeing.
- **International Day** is an opportunity to give recognition to the many different nationalities that are represented at CBS Synge Street. This is a chance to show that we are school which values inclusion and diversity and welcomes all students equally.
- As a link school for TUDublin, their **Access** office invites students to take part in many activities to promote college awareness at Junior Cycle and to build links with TUDublin.

Guidance Provision for Fifth Year Students

- In fifth year, students take the traditional **Leaving Certificate**.
- All students have one class of **Wellbeing/RSE** per week.
- All students have a double period of **PE** per week.
- All students participate in a **5th Year Induction** to learn retrieval practice theory and set up tools to use.
- Students participate in **Learning to Learn Week**.
- **Learning or emotional issues** which arise are dealt with through the Student Support Coordinator and the Care Team.
- **Parent teacher meetings** for fifth years are scheduled.
- The **Student Support Coordinator liaises** with parents, subject teachers and the Guidance Counsellor to address any issues of concern.
- Students can avail of **counselling** with the Guidance Counsellor and parents and the Guidance Counsellor on request. These can be in relation to personal, educational or career matters.
- **Referrals** to outside agencies are made when particular issues are beyond the school resources and expertise.
- The **Behaviour for Learning** teacher runs interventions on an individual and small group basis with students deemed to benefit from them.

- **Regular assemblies** are conducted to reinforce positive behaviour, to provide positive feedback to year groups and highlight all the activities which take place for that year group.
- **Anti-bullying surveys** are conducted both to prevent and to investigate bullying occurrences.
- **Mental Health Week** involves activities organised and speakers invited in to promote mental health awareness and wellbeing.
- **International Day** is an opportunity to give recognition to the many different nationalities that are represented at CBS Synge Street. This is a chance to show that we are school which values inclusion and diversity and welcomes all students equally.
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Guidance Provision for Sixth Year Students

- In sixth year, there is a strong emphasis on each student reaching their potential.
- All students have one class of **Wellbeing/RSE** per week.
- All students have a double period of **PE** per week.
- Students participate in **Learning to Learn Week**.
- **Learning or emotional issues** which arise are dealt with through the Student Support Coordinator and the Care Team.
- **Parent teacher meetings** for sixth years are scheduled.
- The **Student Support Coordinator liaises** with parents, subject teachers and the Guidance Counsellor to address any issues of concern.
- **Individual meetings** are held between students and the guidance counsellor and parents and the guidance counsellor on request. These can be in relation to personal, educational or career matters.
- Students can avail of **counselling** with the Guidance Counsellor and parents and the Guidance Counsellor on request. These can be in relation to personal, educational or career matters.
- **Referrals** to outside agencies are made when particular issues are beyond the school resources and expertise.
- The **Behaviour for Learning** teacher runs interventions on an individual and small group basis with students deemed to benefit from them.

- **Regular assemblies** are conducted to reinforce positive behaviour, to provide positive feedback to year groups and highlight all the activities which take place for that year group.
- **Anti-bullying surveys** are conducted both to prevent and to investigate bullying occurrences.
- All sixth year students attend the **Higher Options Exhibition**.
- Sixth year students are encouraged to attend **Higher and Further Education Open Days** on Saturdays to ensure they do not miss class time.
- Students have **one-to-one career planning meetings** with the Guidance Counsellor. Appointments are distributed during class. It is the aim of the Guidance service to ensure that each sixth year student receives a minimum of one guidance appointment with the Guidance Counsellor. If a student requires more time, another appointment can be organised by arrangement with the Guidance Counsellor.
- **Visiting speakers** are invited throughout the year. These are generally from **Higher Education Institutes (HEI) or Colleges of Further Education (CFE)**. There may be general information talks on the specific HEI or they may be subject specific, depending on the needs of the year group.
- **Important dates and deadlines** are announced in Guidance class, over the intercom and through the Career Guidance Teams posts page.
- **Reminder texts** are sent to parents.
- **Mental Health Week** involves activities organised and speakers invited in to promote mental health awareness and wellbeing.
- **International Day** is an opportunity to give recognition to the many different nationalities that are represented at CBS Synge Street. This is a chance to show that we are school which values inclusion and diversity and welcomes all students equally.
- As a link school for TUDublin, their **Access** office invites students to take part in many activities to promote college awareness at Junior Cycle and to build links with TUDublin.
- A **Graduation ceremony** is conducted.

Section C: Current Guidance Procedures

Subject Choice Procedure

Subject choices have to be taken by students on three different occasions outlined below

Junior Cycle

1. Upon enrolment to First Year

Core Subjects		Optional Subjects
English Irish Maths History Geography Science	Religion CSPE SPHE Wellbeing PE	Business/Art French/German/Spanish (MFL groups assigned at enrolment by class group unless specific family/cultural rationale exists)

2. Third year students have a decision to make in two areas:
 - a. Whether to do Higher or Ordinary level (where possible) at Junior Certificate
 - b. Whether to do Transition Year or continue into Fifth Year.

Senior Cycle

Students study three core subjects and choose four subjects (with the exception of students where a specific exemption may apply). This choice is normally made in Spring of Third Year/Transition Year.

Core Subjects	Optional Subjects	
English Irish Maths	French German Spanish History Geography Business Accounting	Economics Art Physics Chemistry Biology Computer Science

These choices can vary from year to year according to availability.

In keeping with the policy of supporting our students through the process of developing their full potential, the Guidance Counsellor provides help and support at each stage of the decision-making process and is available to all students for advice and guidance. Subject teachers are also available to students by providing information pertaining to their subject.

Counselling and Student Appointment Procedures

General

Students make an appointment with the Guidance Counsellor for a variety of reasons:

- For career options,
- For information,
- For personal reasons.

Each student is entitled to 'adequate guidance' under the Education Act of 1998. This will vary from student to student with some students requiring more time than others.

Careers Appointment

Career interviews will typically include the following:

- Analysis of Career Guidance Record sheet completed by student,
- Analysis of Careers Portal inventory,
- Career values,
- Options Available,
- Based on this analysis, a college/career path is developed with each student.

Priority of appointments is given to sixth year students. Appointments for other years are given as soon as possible.

Arrangement of Appointments

Career appointments are given in Guidance class or are given directly to students. They usually begin in mid-September, depending on the size of the year group. They receive an appointment notation in their journal and on VSWare. A schedule of career appointments is also posted in the staff room to minimize conflict with class assessments/trips/speakers, etc. Students may make a follow up appointment at the end of this initial appointment.

Information Appointments

These are arranged outside of class time with the Guidance Counsellor. Students receive an appointment notation in their journal and on VSWare.

Personal Counselling Appointments

The Care Team members, Student Support Coordinators and Class Teachers play a central role in the delivery of the Counselling programme. Personal Counselling appointment may arise from a variety of reasons:

- A student may be referred to the Guidance Counsellor by a teacher,
- A parent may ask for some intervention by the Guidance Counsellor,
- A student may approach the Guidance Counsellor directly and ask for an appointment,
- A member of staff may ask the Guidance Counsellor to meet with a student,
- A referral may be made through the Care Team.

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.

Possible reasons for appointments may include:

- Personal problems,
- Family problems,
- Relationship problems,
- Coping skills,
- Motivation,
- Making choices,
- Transition to third level education and the adult world.

Personal Counselling Procedures

Personal counselling appointments will be made as soon as possible. Students receive an appointment notation in their journal and on VSWare. At times, however, it may be necessary for the Guidance Counsellor to seek out a student for an appointment.

Central Applications Office (CAO) Appointments

The choice of career path is the responsibility of each individual student. It is the policy of this school that each student should be adequately prepared to make this choice. CAO appointments for applying to college are made in late November of the Leaving Certificate year.

To help students to make this choice, during Guidance class each student is:

- Shown how the application process works and a demonstration run is completed with the students.
- Given an allotted time whereby they can make their application using the school's computers.
- Offered CAO application appointments with the Guidance Counsellor and each student is given an appointment notation in their journal and on VSWare.

The Guidance Counsellor may be present in school when the CAO applications are being made to offer support and assistance where required by the students.

The Education Act of 1998, Section 9(c) states that a school shall use its resources to 'ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices'.

In complying with this, each student is encouraged in developing their full potential and in making a career choice that reflects their goals.

Where a student chooses to apply for third level education to a CAO affiliated college it is the policy of the school that each student is supported through the CAO application process. While it is the responsibility of each student to make the actual application, the school will endeavor to support each student through the process.

Sixth Year Tracking of Students

Every year the Home School Community Liaison follows up on where our students progress to.

Guidance Counsellor Year Calendar

The Guidance Counsellor shall as soon as practicable draw up a calendar to show the various Guidance activities that impact on the school. The Guidance Counsellor shall endeavor to keep this calendar updated with any new information as well as informing the relevant people when this arises.

Any events that the Guidance Counsellor goes to are discussed with management.

Typical events include:

- Supervision
- CAO conference
- Higher Options
- IGC Conference
- Other relevant Guidance Counsellor's in-service
- Open Days
- Application Dates for CAO and UCAS
- Various career events which may be of interest to students or staff

A professional relationship involving confidentiality is at the core of Guidance Counselling. The Guidance Counsellor takes all reasonable steps to ensure that consultation with students takes place in an appropriately private environment.

The Guidance Counsellor will take all reasonable steps to preserve the confidentiality of information about students obtained in the course of professional work. They reveal such information only with the student's consent, but with certain exceptions which include: where concealment would result in danger to the student or others; when required by the Law or designated Child Protection guidelines; or for purposes of professional consultation or supervision.

It is the duty of the Guidance Counsellor to inform each student about their legal limits on confidentiality. Students are advised that they will be consulted on each step taken by the Guidance Counsellor. They are advised that the Guidance Counsellor will take no action or discuss their case without first informing the student. The students are aware that they will be kept abreast of steps taken by the Guidance Counsellor.

The Guidance Counsellor will discuss information about students only for professional purposes, and only with those who are clearly entitled to be consulted. Written and oral reports contain only such data as is pertinent to the case, and every effort will be made to avoid undue invasion of the student's privacy.

Subject to the law, the Guidance Counsellor will take all reasonable steps to safeguard the storage, retrieval and disposal of students' records, both written and electronic.

The Guidance Counsellor will take all reasonable steps to ensure that colleagues, the Principal and others with whom they work understand and respect the need for confidentiality.

Assessment Procedures

A range of assessment tools are used in the Guidance Programme to supplement academic and teacher reports.

Assessment of Incoming First Year Students

Currently the assessment test is administered by the Guidance Counsellor and SEN coordinator as part of the entrance procedures that incoming First Year students are asked to take. The test administered is the Cognitive Ability Test (CAT4).

This test gives the school an indication of the strengths of incoming students in the areas of verbal, non-verbal, numerical, and spatial reasoning. The SEN coordinator contacts feeder primary schools in order to identify the particular needs of students. The SEN coordinator will meet with all the relevant parties and process applications for the resources required.

Assessment during Third Year

Before transitioning from Junior Cycle to Senior Cycle, Third Year students take the CAT4 Level G. This test gives the school an indication of the strengths of students in the areas of verbal, non-verbal, numerical and spatial reasoning in terms of their Leaving Certificate subject choices.

Assessment during Transition Year

Transition Year students are introduced to the Careers Portal website and the REACH+ programme. Through this site students are encouraged to conduct career research and to become familiar with the workings of the site. Tests taken during Transition Year include:

- Career Sector Profiler
- Career Skills Profiler
- Enterprise Skills Profiler

Assessment during Fifth Year

Throughout Fifth Year, students will use the Careers Portal website which has vast resources in relation to pursuing college courses and future careers. As students have access to computers in every Guidance class these tests are carried out online. Students create an online REACH+ account and will save all their findings to use for future research. These tests include:

- Interest-base tests to see what level of interest a student would have in a particular career or course.
- Personality tests which allow the students to gain more self-knowledge.
- Career values questionnaires in order for students to work out what is important to them in relation to their future.
- DATS for Guidance (not on the Careers Portal website) to determine more varied aptitudes than those measured using the CAT4 for future courses and careers.

Assessment during Sixth Year

Throughout Sixth Year, students will continue to use the Careers Portal website to conduct research into courses and careers of interest. Students are encouraged to re-take the tests taken during Fifth Year and to additionally take:

- Colour-blindness test
- Multiple Intelligences Inventory

Guest Speakers

It is normal for speakers from individual colleges to give talks to senior class groups. These talks are both informative and useful motivators as they give the students an overview of the courses which are available in different colleges and they give students an overview of third level education.

Speakers from TUDublin Access office and from the Trinity Access Programme are arranged to inform Sixth Year student about HEAR, DARE, Access Programmes and the application process for each of these.

Other speakers are arranged subject to demand and in consultation with the students, staff and management. Talks may be held on certain subject areas depending on the demand in a given year.

Notice of guest speakers is posted on the Staffroom Team posts. A list of students who will attend will be attached and notification will be made for individual students on VSWare.

Records

The Guidance Counsellor shall keep such records as relate to her role. Records are kept in two forms:

- Electronically
- Hard copy.

All personal contact details are accessed on the school's VSWare programme.

Electronic records are kept with due regard to the provisions of the Data Protection Act. These files may contain:

- CAT4 results
- Inventories results
- Career inventory
- Values worksheet
- Guidance Tracking spreadsheet

Also each individual visit is recorded and kept on file. This includes, for all Sixth Year students, the following information:

- Name
- Age
- Siblings
- Career interests
- Colleges which students wish to apply for

These files are kept for seven years after the student has left the school.

All files pertaining to an individual student kept by the Guidance Counsellor are available to be viewed by the student. All files are kept in accordance with the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act and Data Protection Act.

Open Days- Sixth Year Students

As part of the Careers programme in the school, Sixth Year students are encouraged to attend the Irish Times Higher Options Exhibition and Open Days that are organized by Third Level institutions. In order to minimize the disruption to school life, students will be encouraged to attend Open Days that are organized at weekends.

Attendance at Open Days will be confined to Sixth Year students only with the exception of a whole year group visit to Griffith College. The school views Open Days as a good way to meet and speak with lecturers and current students, discuss study plans, and find out more about what the different institutions can offer them. They may include an opportunity to visit any exhibitions hosted by various Institutes. These allow students to form a better picture of what is entailed in further education and of what life as a third level student is like.

Procedure for Organizing Open Days: Sixth Year Students

The Guidance Counsellor in collaboration with the Principal and the Sixth Year Student Support Coordinator shall advise what Open Days are due in the coming year. The number of Open Days is generally limited to two per student. Where practicable visits to College Open Days will occur in the afternoon or on Saturday to minimize class time missed by students.

A list of selected open days is given to the students. This may include Universities, Institutes of Technology, and Colleges of Further Education. All Open Day information is accessible to all students on the individual College/University website.

Permission for students who wish to attend open day events during regular school time will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Students must request a permission form from the Guidance Counsellor and obtain signatures from: Parent/Guardian, Guidance Counsellor, Student Support Coordinator, and finally sign it himself. The form is to be returned to the Guidance Counsellor who will keep it on record.

Information regarding Open Days

Lists of Open Days are displayed on the Guidance Page of the school website and on the 6th Year Career Guidance Team. They are also available through the CAO website, Qualifax, Careers Portal and individual college websites.

The Value of Open Days and Making the Most of Them

Open days are very important in the process of career exploration and planning. Visiting a college for an open day should be regarded by the student as a worthwhile exercise which requires planning and effort on the day. It should be a good learning experience enabling the student to look behind the title of the courses. The focus should be on understanding what courses are about and what potential career they may lead to. Students may think they know what is involved in subjects that are familiar, such as English

or Geography, but these are often very different at third level. Therefore they should discover the differences when visiting the college.

Planning for the Open Day

Students are encouraged during Guidance class to prepare for open day visits by:

- Visiting a college website and reading the prospectus before they go.
- Getting a map/guide of the college and decide beforehand which departments in the college they intend visiting.
- Making a list of the courses/subjects in which they are interested.
- Planning their time well and leaving time for lectures, demonstrations, and/or visits to laboratories, etc.
- Deciding whether to take an organized tour of the college. This may be very useful in giving an overall 'feel' for the particular campus.
- Planning the questions you will ask. In order to get answers, you must ask questions.
- Using the template in their Guidance workbook for Open Days.

Students Changing a Subject/Changing a Subject Level

A student may be referred to the Guidance Counsellor in the event of that student wishing to drop a subject, to ensure they understand the implications, if any, of their actions. Equally, in the event of a change from higher to ordinary, ordinary to foundation, or any other request for a change in level, a student may be referred to the Guidance Counsellor for advice and guidance. The Guidance Counsellor will consult with the Principal and with the relevant subject teachers. The subject teachers make the decision as to the change of subject, with the Principal making the decision in extreme circumstances. Where a student is changing subject and/or level, a note is required from parents outlining that this change is agreeable to them.

Care Team Meetings

Regular meetings of the Care Team are organized between the Principal, Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellor, Behaviour for Learning Teacher, SEN coordinator/SEN teacher, School Completion Programme Coordinator, and Home School Community Liaison. Student Support Coordinators are invited to attend for specific Care Team meetings that focus on their year group. The aim is to conduct these meetings weekly. Each meeting has an agenda and minutes are kept.

Learning to Learn Week

The school management and School Completion Programme Coordinator, in consultation with the Student Support Coordinators, may arrange specific study skills programme, delivered by an outside agency, for students in third and sixth year.

A study skills programme- Learning to Learn Week- will be delivered school-wide by all teachers during October with various practices that relate to specific subjects, as well as methods to organize and plan studying.

Section D: Current Policies related to Guidance

Policy Name

Special Educational Needs Policy

Internet Usage Policy

RSE Policy

Anti-Bullying Policy

Code of Behaviour

Child Protection Policy

Confidentiality Policy

DEIS Plan

The Guidance Policy should be read in conjunction with these policies. These policies are held by the school management and are available through the school management.

Section E: Guidance Resources

Guidance Counsellor's office

Phone

Computer networked to the main school network

Printer

Broadband available in office

Locked filing cabinet

Notice boards

Use of computer room and/or class set of Surface Pros for class and resources

Information relating to outside agencies

REACH+ workbooks for Senior Cycle students

College Materials- Current Irish and UK prospectuses as well as a range of careers related publications

Section F: The Role of the Guidance Counsellor

Name of Guidance Counsellor

Sarah Eastman

Qualifications

BA English, MAT (Hons), MSc Guidance and Counselling (Hons)

The Guidance Counsellor is professionally trained to undertake the following tasks within the school guidance programme.

Counselling

Empowering students to make decisions, solve problems, change behaviours and resolve issues in their lives. Such activity may be personal counselling, educational counselling, career counselling, or it may involve combinations of each.

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 on an individual basis is part of the support structure that the school provides to students. Within the overall time allocated for guidance, adequate time is given for the counselling function in the guidance programme.

The rationale for the time allocated and its usage is evident in the school guidance plan. See the Department of Education and Skills *Guidelines for Second Level Schools on the implications of Section 9(c) of the Education Act (1998), relating to students' access to appropriate guidance.*

Support

The Guidance Counsellor provides support to students, parents, teachers, the Principal, Board of Management and referral agencies in assisting the personal, social, career and educational development of students. Such support may include advocacy on behalf of a student.

Assessment

The Guidance Counsellor is trained to use a range of psychometric tests and other evaluative instruments to support relevant objectives of the school guidance programme. Such objectives may be related to career and educational planning, personal decision making and development of self-awareness.

Information

Assisting students to acquire, interpret and use information relevant to their personal, social, educational and career development.

Classroom Guidance Activities

Providing classroom-based learning experiences that are relevant to the objectives of the school guidance programme. Such experiences may include information giving, information and communication technologies (ICT), developmental skills (e.g. planning, decision-making, study skills, communication, values clarification) and career preparation.

Referrals

Seeking for students the assistance of non-school based professionals following standard procedures, e.g. NEPS. The Guidance Counsellor also provides support for students referred to her by teachers, parents and school management. The voluntary participation by the individual concerned is respected in these situations.

Professional Development

The Guidance Counsellor should keep abreast of on-going changes in the fields of training, education and child welfare. The Board of Management and school management should facilitate the attendance of the guidance counsellor at relevant events and at in-career professional training during the school year. Participation in these events should be related to the objectives of the school guidance programme. Attendance at non-school based events should be negotiated/agreed in advance between the Board of Management, school management and the Guidance Counsellor.

Careers Education/ Career Transition Programmes

Enabling students to make transitions to further and higher education, training and employment.

The World of Work

Preparing students for employment.

Consultation

With parents, school staff and students.

Feedback

Giving feedback to the Board of Management, school management and staff on the needs of individual students, groups and the school as an organization, and how the school guidance programme has supported students' choices and transitions.

Networking

Establishing links with employers, relevant agencies and institutions to enhance guidance work with students.

Promoting Change

Assisting curriculum development in the school.

Managing, Organising and Coordinating

It is the Guidance Counsellor's role to organize the guidance activities into a coherent programme in conjunction with the management and staff of the school. The nature and range of guidance activities as outlined above are based on the premise that guidance is both a whole school concern and a specialist area within education.

Communication, Involvement and Dissemination

This policy was written by the Guidance Counsellor. The formation of this policy was done by engaging in a process of collaboration involving the principal, deputy principal, the teaching staff and the Care Team.

Evaluation

We are committed to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of Guidance. As part of this role the Guidance Counsellor will review the plan, to ensure it is meeting the demands of the students and their parents.

Specifically important to our Guidance plan is:

- Student feedback
- Staff feedback
- Parent/Guardian feedback

This plan will be shared with the full teaching staff, students and Parents in September 2021.

Review and Development

We are also committed to the review and development of our school policies. As part of our ongoing review process, this policy will be examined to reflect feedback from our evaluation practices and also to ensure legal compliance and the maintenance of best practices.

Section G: Developmental Areas for Year 2021-2022

OVERVIEW OF ACTION PLAN FOR GUIDANCE

Priorities	Task	Target
To set up DEIS teams under each heading	Management will coordinate teams based on feedback from May 2021 staff survey	September 2021
Induction for Fifth Years	Create programme to prepare those entering 5 th year for the organizational skills and ICT supports to facilitate on-going study for the LC.	August-September 2021
Examine Transitions from JC to LC and LC to life after school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop this area • Complete analysis of what currently is taking place • Analyze the effectiveness of current practice and is it linked with current tracking system 	2021-2022 School Year