

School Guidance Plan

Introduction

This is the Guidance Plan for Ballinteer Community School. It states how the guidance needs of students are to be met. It is an integral part of the School's Plan. It was developed in consultation with all partners within the school community: students, parents, teachers, the senior management team and the Board of Management. The plan is reviewed on an annual basis.

Our school is a non selective, non fee paying school under the trusteeship of the Vocational Education Committee, Brigidine Sisters and the Carmelite Fathers. The Guidance Plan conforms with the school's Mission Statement:

Ballinteer Community School Mission Statement.

The school is committed to providing quality education to its students. The school is dedicated to imparting to them strong moral values, a love of learning, concern for others and the skills necessary to lead purposeful and meaningful lives in their communities. The ethos of the school is Christian and is nurtured in an inclusive and meaningful way so that students of all religious tradition have a strong conviction of Faith and the intellectual curiosity and religious commitment to develop and deepen their knowledge of it.

Definition

Guidance in second level schools refers to a range of learning experiences provided in a developmental sequence that assist students in developing self-management skills which will lead to effective choices and decisions about their lives. It encompasses the three separate, but interlinked, areas of personal and social development, educational guidance and career guidance (Review of Guidance in Second Level Schools, Sept 2006, p.5).

Personal counselling is aimed at equipping the student with an increased self-awareness and self-confidence to go out into the world. It also helps students form constructive relationships where they can take responsibility for their actions and make informed choices. Educational counselling aims to equip students with the confidence to choose subjects and courses that suit them. Students are encouraged to explore their own capabilities through testing and to take responsibility for their choices. Vocational counselling aims to ascertain what career path the student should take with information gathered from assessments to crystallize goals and to make informed choices. The end result is that the student chooses the career that gives meaning to their life and also "becomes the self that one truly is" (Corey, 2004).

This plan will apply to all students within the school. Guidance is not an event, it is an ongoing process, which begins before the student enters the school and can continue when they leave the school.

Rational

It is necessary to develop a Guidance Plan at this time in light of the school's obligations under the Education Act 1998 Section 9 (c) which requires schools to "ensure that schools have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choice". By stating the objectives of the Guidance programme it helps focus limited resources on areas identified by the stakeholders as being most important and the plan encourages input and ownership from all partners in a collaborate and positive fashion.

Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

The Guidance Plan is in keeping with the school's mission statement and aims.

As a Christian school, we aim to provide education in partnership with parents and guardians and other care givers, to support the development of the person in a caring community characterised by mutual respect.

Aims of the Guidance and Counselling Service & Programme

- To meet the social, personal, educational and vocational needs of each student within the school.
- To act as the administrator of all guidance and counselling activities that operate within the school.
- To assist each student in realising, accepting and developing their own unique talents, skills, aptitudes and abilities.
- To assist each student in making realistic, appropriate and informed career choices.
- To provide an integrative model of counselling to any student who wishes to avail of such a service.

Confidentiality Policy

The Guidance & Counselling Service is a professional counselling service, which abides by a strict code of ethics and the confidentiality policy as outlined by the Institute of Guidance Counsellor. Confidentiality is a central and integral part of the counselling process and is assured to each student who avails of the Counselling Service. It offers safety and privacy to those who choose to discuss personal and private concerns. Information given during the counselling session is held in strict confidence. No information written or verbal will be disclosed to a third party without the student's permission. The issue of confidentiality is always discussed with students during the first session. This provides the opportunity to clarify any concerns that may arise. Counselling Service files are not attached to any academic records held within the school.

Limits to Confidentiality

In exceptional circumstances Guidance Counsellor may need to break confidentiality if they believe there is a real intent of serious harm or danger to either their student or another individual. In as far as is possible, in such cases, a full explanation will be given regarding the necessary procedures that may need to be taken.

Personnel involved in planning the Guidance Programme

All members of the school community are welcome to become involved in planning the guidance programme. Key members involved in implementing, monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the Guidance Plan include:

- Students
- Chaplain
- SEN Team
- Teachers of S.P.H.E. / R.S.E.
- R.E. Team
- H.S.C.L.O.
- Deans
- Class Tutors
- Principal / Deputy Principal
- Subject Teachers
- Representatives of the Parents Association
- Board of Management
- Trustees

Method of Delivery of Guidance Programme

The Guidance counsellor has a key role to play in the Careers Project with LCVP students. The Guidance counsellor is a key member of the S.P.H.E. team and may teach within the programme on a modular basis throughout the junior school at appropriate times during the year. Topics including transition, anger management, goal setting, motivation and healthy lifestyles are covered. In second year the guidance counsellor borrows classes from subject teachers and asks every second year student to complete a small scale careers project which requires them to interview a person whose job they find interesting and gather secondary data on the particular career. In this way, students from second year onwards are introduced to career guidance in the junior school. Guidance may be delivered either to individual students, to groups of students, to class groups or when appropriate, at weekly assemblies to whole year groups.

Assessment Policy

Assessments for incoming first year students occurs in conjunction with the S.E.N. team in Ballinteer Community School. The Cognitive Ability Test (CAT) is used. Sixth class pupils are assessed in the March preceding entry.

The New Non Reading Intelligence Test (N.N.R.I.T.) is administered to all 1st year students at the beginning of the academic year. Both the Guidance Counsellor and the SEN team are involved in this testing process. This test measures aspects of language and thinking that are not fully represented in the earlier stages of learning in reading and mathematics.

The NGRT (3rd edition) is also used at this time. It provides us with the student's reading age as well as a standardised score and percentile rank. The Vernon graded spelling test (3rd Edition) is also used.

Differential Aptitude Tests for Guidance are administered by the Guidance Counsellor with the assistance of other staff members. The DATS are administered at a suitable time following consultation with the relevant Dean.

A range of interest inventories both on-line and in-print are used by the Guidance Counsellor at different points in time with various year groups.

Educational Guidance and Counselling Programme in Junior Cycle

First Years

- Open Night / Information Evening for prospective students and parents. Information is given on: School structure/ roles of key personnel/ subject choice/ methods of communication between home and school.

- Assessments for prospective students in March of academic year prior to entry.
- Formal communication with primary school teachers from established feeder schools to: gain an accurate profile of the incoming students; identify children requiring resource/ learning support; gain personal information of family set up, bereavements, single parent family etc.
- Welcome morning for first year students (gain assistance of T.Y. Buddy's as mentors).
- Formal introduction to Guidance Counsellor in a classroom setting to inform them of the role of the counsellors and explain how they can make contact with us.
- By the end of September ensure every First Year Student has been interviewed by a guidance counsellor, establish a strong rapport at this time.
- Study Skills seminar.
- Personal Counselling by request or referral by teachers/ chaplain/ year heads/ parents/ DP/ Principal.
- Liaise with Dean and Tutors and other school staff, as well as parents, to ensure a smooth transition by all students has been made by mid term.
- Liaise with S.P.H.E Department and, if necessary teach S.P.H.E (on a modular basis as recommended by Inspectorate).
- Appointments with parents by request.
- Be available during parent teacher meetings.
- Initiate referral to outside agencies as appropriate e.g. NEPS etc.

Second Years

- Study Skills Seminar
- Personal counselling as necessary by request or referral
- Educational counselling by request or referral
- Appointments with parents by request
- Meeting with pastoral care team to discuss individual student's needs
- Be available during parent teacher meeting
- Initiate referral to outside agencies as appropriate e.g. NEPS

Third Years

- Study Skills seminar
 - S.P.H.E. Topics to be taught (on a modular basis)
 - Subject Choice Meeting in conjunction with Subject teachers
 - Classroom based guidance on the need to make informed and appropriate decisions in terms of subject choice and levels to be attempted
 - Information Evening for parents of third years re options post Junior Certificate
-
- Programme Choice / subject choice/ levels etc
 - Educational Counselling by request or referral
 - Meet with pastoral care team to ensure needs of individual students are met
 - Interviews with parents as requested
 - Personal Counselling by request or referral
 - Administration of Psychometric Tests, Interests Inventories
 - Feedback and discussion of results on an individual basis
 - Be available during parent teacher meeting
 - Initiate referral to outside agencies as appropriate e.g. NEPS

Educational Guidance and Counselling in the Senior School

Transition Year

Aims of programme during Transition Year

- To help students prepare for vocational maturity
- To help students become aware of their own unique strengths and talents
- To help students develop effective decision making skills
- To help students prepare for entry to the world of work
- To help the students gain the practical skills necessary to help them in their pursuit of work experience and paid part time / summer employment
- As TY is drawing to a close. to prepare students for the transition into the Leaving Cert cycle.

Topics to be covered

- · Application forms
- · Letters of Application
- · Curriculum Vitae
- · Interview Skills
- · Coaching for initial telephone contact with prospective employers
- · Preparation for Work Experience
- · Evaluation of Work Experience
- · Research Skills
- Project Work - Career Investigation
- Skills relevant to Entrepreneurship.

Key Elements

- Administration of Differential Aptitude Tests for Guidance and individual feedback to each student prior to subject choice time.
- Information sessions to each fourth year class on subject choice and minimum entry and course specific entry requirements.
- Parent Information Evening to explain the importance of correct subject choice for Leaving Certificate and implications of not selecting certain subjects e.g. a science subject or a European Language.

Fifth Year Programme

- Continue and Develop themes from Transition Year
- Study skills seminars
- Check in with all fifth years to ensure they are content with subject choices
- Focus attention on life after the Leaving Certificate
- Hopes, Dreams, ambitions, realistic goal setting, maintain motivation, promoting the importance of a healthy lifestyle
- Post Leaving Certificate Options

- National Qualification Framework
- Current and Future Career Trends
- Employment
- Entrepreneurship
- Opportunities within Colleges of Further Education
- Third Level Education Opportunities
- Opportunities with Solas, Teagasc, Guards, Military, Navy Cadetships, Failte Ireland etc
- Execute an in depth career investigation with all students, not just LCVP students
- Further develop job seeking skills
- Employment Law
- Implications of Part Time work on study
- Be available during parent teacher meeting
- Introduction to UCAS, CAO, Colleges of Further Education, Private Colleges and other educational opportunities

Sixth Year Guidance Programme

- Appointments with previous sixth year students if necessary.
- During final week of September make contact with last years students - conduct a destination survey, inform Board of Management, Principal and staff of results.
- Organisation of Higher Options Conference, RDS Dublin
- Organise and update careers Library, Careers Notice Board(s)
- Individual Vocational Guidance Interviews with all sixth year students (commence early October)
- Be available during parent teacher meeting
- Group Seminar to those wishing to apply through UCAS system, provide relevant information, focus on importance of personal statement, organise references for same.
- Personal Counselling by referral or request
- Parent appointments as needed
- Information Evening for parents of Sixth Year Students on the following topics:
 - CAO, UCAS, Points System, Entry Requirements, Colleges of Further Education, Private Colleges, Solas, Teagasc. Failte Ireland, Employment Trends, Destination Survey of previous Sixth Year cohort
- Invite Guest speakers as appropriate throughout the year DCU, NUIM, TCD, UCD, DIT, Solas, NCI and speakers from various Colleges of Further Education
- Further appointments where necessary i.e. those requiring further advice, those requiring assistance in preparing for interviews e.g. UCAS, PLC courses
- PLC Applications - Information briefings for relevant students, completion of application forms
- Repeat and review Job Hunting skills
- Review Curriculum Vitae preparation
- Interview Skills for Employment

- Stress Management techniques and Healthy Lifestyle behaviour
- Teach the Guidance Module of the Leaving Certificate Applied VPG course
- Transmit up to date information on Higher Education grants/ costs associated with College/ living away from home/ flat hunting/ tenancies / budgeting
- Commence gathering material for references for Leaving Certificate Students
- Initiate referral to outside agencies as appropriate
- Evaluation of Programme - Administer questionnaire to current sixth years/ Discuss results with senior management.

Links to other Policies and Curriculum Development

This Guidance Policy is consistent with other school policies already in place:

- Code of Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying
- Learning Support
- Code of Discipline
- Admissions Policy
- Critical Incident Response Plan
- R.S.E. Policy
- S.P.H.E. Policy

Ratification and Communication of Plan

Students, staff members, parents and members of the Board of Management were consulted in relation to early drafts of the plan and all suggestions were taken on board.

The Board of Management ratified the plan on May 23rd 2013 after the completion of the consultation process. The plan is available on the school website and at the school admin. office and any parent wishing to access a copy will be given a photocopy of it. All school staff have been emailed a copy of the document.

Review Procedures

The Guidance Plan will be reviewed and evaluated at predetermined times in the light of experience and feedback from parents, students and teachers. A committee consisting of the Principal and/ or Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellor, one nominated teacher, one nominated Dean, and one nominated member of The Parents Association will review the plan. As noted earlier, a questionnaire (anonymous) is given to the sixth year group at the end of each year to help improve the Guidance service.

Bill Core May 2013