



Coláiste Cois Siúire Mooncoin

# Whole School Guidance Plan

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## **Section 1- Aims of Our School Guidance Programme**

### **1.1 What is guidance in schools?**

Guidance counselling and Guidance and counselling 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 categorised into three distinct but interlinked areas:

Personal and social

Educational

Career

Guidance activities that assist students make informed choices include:

Personal counselling

Assessment using psychometric instruments and inventories

Career information e.g. (career classes, personal vocational guidance interviews, attendance at career events)

Use of information technology eg. Careers Portal, Qualifax, student finance

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.

### **1.2 School Philosophy and Mission Statement**

Coláiste Cois Siúire aims to help each student achieve her full potential, academically, spiritually, physically, emotionally and socially in a happy secure environment.

In achieving this, the Guidance Counsellor plays an important part in the areas of counselling and guidance as well as involvement in the Pastoral Care programme.

### **1.3 The Aims of the Guidance Counselling Service**

The Guidance Counselling Service is seen as having a central role in the continuous developmental guidance process of each individual student, which begins prior to the entry of the student to the school and concludes when the student has left the school.

#### **1.3.1 Guidance**

To deal with all students in an eclectic and multicultural manner in order to aid them in developing their full potential.

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

The plan is inclusive, providing for the junior, senior, minority, special education needs of all students.

The plan will include all guidance activities: career classes, Vocational Guidance Interviews, attendance at career exhibitions, open days, meeting with management, and support agencies.

To provide a caring and supportive service, which would be three fold

1. Personal and Social
2. Educational
3. Vocational

**Personal and Social:** This would encompass developmental skills crucial to the students' education and careers eg. self awareness, decision making skills, planning, coping strategies.

**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.

**Vocational:** includes 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.

#### **1.3.2 Counselling:**

To provide a counselling environment which would be both caring and non- judgemental in a one to one or group basis. This service would be aimed at helping students in areas such as:

Decision making

Problem solving

Changing behaviours

Effect meaningful changes in their lives

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**

Develop awareness and acceptance of their talents and abilities

Identify and explore opportunities

Grow in independence and take responsibility for themselves

Make informed choices about their lives and follow through on these choices

### **1.4 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).

### **1.5 Scope**

The Guidance Plan involves all aspects of school life and as such it is a whole school activity.

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:**

School Management

Year Heads

Subject Teachers and Departments

Special Needs Co-ordinator

Parents

School Maintenance Staff

Support Personnel

**The Guidance Plan is a reflection of this teamwork.**

The Guidance Counsellor, as part of his job, may liaise with outside agencies such as

Department of Education and Science

Local Community

Business

Garda Liaison Officers

Employment Agencies

Feeder Schools (Year Head & Principal)

Health Service Executive

Referral Agencies

Social Services

## **Section 2- Current Guidance Provision and Programme**

### Part 1 Current Guidance Provision

#### **2.1.1 Junior Cycle**

The Guidance Counsellor takes first year students for an introduction to the Guidance Service.

The First Years students also receive help and support in choosing what subjects to take in first year and the implications of their decision as well as support on settling into secondary school, timetable and organisation of lockers.

Third Year students receive support in their choices for fifth year and in what implications this might have at Leaving Certificate level.

NB: From 2019/20 Third Years will receive support in relation to entering into Transition year Work Experience and mini companies.

#### **2.1.2 Senior Cycle**

5th and 6th year class groups are each timetabled for at least one careers class per week.

Each senior student meets with the Guidance Counsellor. If a student requires more time than this it can be organised by arrangement with the Guidance Counsellor.

### Part 2 Current Guidance Programme

#### **2.2.1 Introduction**

The Guidance curriculum may be divided into two components:

Formal

Informal.

#### **Formal Guidance**

The Formal Guidance curriculum is delivered using two forms of intervention employing a number of methodologies:

1. Individual contact of a personal counselling nature and careers/vocational guidance.

2. Classroom guidance delivered in regular weekly classes to senior cycle students, rotating modules, class group or year group intervention as required.

### **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 policy in relation to the delivery of The Guidance Plan. Meetings with Parents/Guardians form an integral part of Informal guidance.

#### **2.2.1 Junior Cycle**

##### **First Years**

Introduction to the Guidance Counselling Service

Subject Choice and its implications.

Personal Counselling.

##### **Second Years**

Subject Levels.

#### **2.2.2 Senior Cycle**

##### **Aims:**

The aim of the guidance Counselling Programme is to help students to develop an awareness and acceptance 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 those choices.

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

##### **Objectives:**

The guidance programme should endeavour 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 successful transition into adulthood
- ❖ learn about job search and job retention skills develop research and
- ❖ ICT 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 awareness of the need for lifelong learning
- ❖ develop skills to become independent and self-motivated learners.

## **Contents of the Programme**

### **1. Self Assessment**

Career Interest

Interest Tests

Personality

Career Values

**Guidance Counsellor- Class**

### **2. Career Profile**

**Guidance Counsellor**

### **3. Relating profile to career**

Abilities

Interests

Aptitudes

Strengths

Weaknesses

**Guidance Counsellor**

### **4. Personality Guidance Counsellor/SPHE Teacher**

### **5. What options are available?**

**Guidance Counsellor/ Subject Teachers**

### **6. How the Education and FETAC system work**

**Guidance Counsellor**

### **7. The different forms of Third Level Education**

**Guidance Counsellor**

### **8. Open Days Guidance Counsellor / Year Head**

### **9. Labour Market**

Labour market trends

C.V's

Letters of Application

Career Development trends

Employment opportunities/ Legislation

ICT developments in the workplace

**Guidance Counsellor/ LCVP Teacher**

**10. Challenges to living and learning**

**Guidance Counsellor / SPHE**

**11. Social and Community**

Issues: Bullying, Suicide, Depression, Illegal substances

**SPHE / Guidance Counsellor**

**12. Grants Guidance Counsellor**

SUSI Grants on line applications

**13. Study Skills and Exam Preparation**

**Guidance Counsellor / Tutors /**

**Subject Teachers**

**14. Interviews Guidance Counsellor**

**15. Higher Options Guidance Counsellor**

**16. UCAS system.**

**Guidance Counsellor**

## Section 3 Current Guidance Procedures

### 3.1 Subject Choice Procedures

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

#### 3.1.1 Junior Cycle

First year to Second year

All students do eight core subjects see below. The subject option choice is normally made by students in November of First Year after completing a number of weeks in the various taster sessions. All students have the option of sampling all of the choice subjects. Students pick three of the choice subjects.

<b>Core Subject</b>	<b>Choice Subjects</b>
Irish	Business
English	Home Economics
Mathematics	Art
History	Technical Graphics
Geography	Woodwork
Science	Metalwork
Religion	Music
CPSE	French (2 <sup>nd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> year)
French (1 <sup>st</sup> year)	

#### 3.1.2 Senior Cycle

Students study four core subjects and choose another three subjects. (exception of students where a specific exemption may apply).

This choice is normally made in May of Third Year.

### **Senior Cycle Subject Choice:**

#### **Core Subject**

Irish

English

Mathematics

#### **Choice Subjects**

French

Art

Business

Biology

Geography

History

Home Economics (Social and Scientific)

Design and Communication Graphics

Construction Studies

Engineering

LCVP Link Modules

The choices vary from year to year depending on the available resources.

Students complete a list of their preferred subjects in May of Third year and the Principal then decides on the subjects based on the information received.

## **3.2 Counselling and Student Appointment Policy**

### **3.2.1 General**

Students make appointments with the Guidance Counsellor for a variety of reasons

#### **Careers, Information, Personal reasons**

Each student is entitled to “adequate guidance” under the Education Act 1998.

This will vary from student to student with some students requiring more time than others.

Please note: the role of school Guidance Counsellor in Coláiste Cois Siúire is split for the academic year 2019/20, and until further notice, into two distinct job specifications. Careers and Educational Transitions’-related duties of the role are to be carried out by an appointed teacher. Counselling, pastoral and student support-related duties are to be provided for an external agent named below. For the purposes of this policy document, it should be assumed that ‘Guidance Counsellor’ refers to this external agent unless otherwise specified.

The appointed school Counsellor for 2019/20 is Ms Lisa Fitzgerald.

### **3.2.2 Career’s Appointment**

Career Interviews will typically include the following:

Analysis of subject results

Analysis of Career Inventory

Career Values

Options Available

Based on this analysis a career path is mapped out for each student

### **3.2.3 Career Appointments**

Priority for appointments is given to 6th Year students. Appointments for 5th year students will be scheduled from February onwards. Appointments for other years are dependent on time availability.

### **3.2.4 Arranging Appointments**

Career appointments are given in advance and are posted on the careers notice board as well as a written appointment given to each student in their

Changing timetabled slots is allowed in exceptional circumstances and if adequate notification is given.

### **3.2.5 Information Appointments**

These are arranged with the Guidance Counsellor outside of career class time.

### **3.2.6 Written Permission**

It is essential that when attending a Career or Information appointment each student firstly goes to his/her class teacher with an appointment slip or relevant permission. The class teacher will then sign the slip and mark the student as present. The student will also get the homework from the class that he/she is missing. **For 2018 onwards the Guidance Counsellor on a trial basis will fill appointments in the students' diary.** The teacher releasing the student will co-sign the diary thus ensuring up to date records are kept.

### **3.2.7 Personal Counselling Appointments**

The Student Support Team members, Year Heads and Home School Liaison play a central role in the delivery of the Counselling Programme.

Personal Counselling appointments may arise for 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 student in the school may refer another student.

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.

It may be necessary for the school Counsellor to refer a student to an additional support service or agency if they deem that a student's needs are beyond the scope of their remit.

### **3.2.8 Reasons**

- Possible reasons for an appointment may include:
- Personal problems
- Family problems
- Relationship problems
- Coping skills
- Motivation
- Making choices
- Transition to 3rd level education and the adult world.

### **3.2.9 Procedure**

Within the resource provision of the school, personal counselling appointments may be arranged as soon as is possible. The referral pathway is via the Student Support Team (DP, HSCL, SCP, and Counsellor) in consultation with the Careers teacher and school

management to adjudge who may best serve the needs of the student. In cases where students are at immediate risk of harm and the school counsellor may be immediately unavailable, parents will be informed. Students must have prior permission to attend a school counselling appointment.

**Due to GDPR considerations, records of counselling notes, using an agreed coding system, should be retained for 7 years and then shredded.**

### **3.2.10 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.

The Education Act 1998 states that a school shall use its resources to .....

“Section 9 (c) .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 her full potential and in making a Career choice that reflects her 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 ultimate responsibility of each student to make the actual application the school will endeavour to support each student through the process.

### **6th year Analysis of Results**

It is the policy of the school to track the career choices made by the students after the Leaving Certificate results have been released. This is a reflection of the concern the school feels for the development of the students.

1. In May students are asked by the Guidance Counsellor for permission to contact them in order to find out what career choices they made in regard to

- further education
- going directly into employment
- taking a “gap” year

2. Sixth year students are asked to provide the Guidance Counsellor with contact details whereby they can be contacted by the school in September/October regarding their final choice of course or career.

3. In October this information is collated by the Counsellor and list is made showing the final destinations of that year’s sixth year students.

4. This will show

- what careers were chosen.
- what colleges were chosen.
- what courses were chosen.

- Those who went directly into employment
- if any students chose to take a year out before entering third level.

5. This information is made available to the Board of Management, the Staff, Students and Parents on request

### **3.4 Guidance Counsellor Year Calendar**

The Guidance Counsellor shall as soon as is practicable draw a calendar to show the various Guidance activities that impact on the school and shall post a copy of this in the Staffroom. A copy of this shall also be given to both the Principal and in future will be given to the Transition Year Co-ordinator in order that school activities can be coordinated.

The Guidance Counsellor shall endeavour to keep this calendar updated with any new information as well as informing the relevant people when this arises.

This will typically show:

CAO Conference

Higher Options STEM Conference

Guidance Counsellor's Conference

Other Relevant Guidance Counsellor's Inservice

Open Days

Application Dates for –CAO, UCAS

### **3.5 Confidentiality**

3.5.1 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.

3.5.2 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 guidelines; or for purposes of professional consultation or supervision.

3.5.3 It is the duty of the Guidance Counsellor to inform each student about their legal limits on confidentiality.

3.5.4 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 are pertinent to the case, and every effort will be made to avoid undue invasion of the students' privacy.

3.5.5 The Guidance Counsellor will publish oral or written information about students only with their written consent, or where the identity of individuals or groups is adequately disguised.

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

3.5.7 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.

3.5.8 The Guidance Counsellor will, in the discourse of their duties, adhere to all and any mandated obligations under the Children First Act 2015, the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017 and any subsequent legislative documents or circulars. The Guidance Counsellor acknowledges their role as a mandated person, and this function, in relation to the DLP, the DDLP or, if the need arises, An Garda Síochána in accordance with legislation.

### **3.6 Reasonable Accommodation**

Occasionally a student may require special consideration in the State Examinations. The Guidance Counsellor will liaise with the SEN Co-ordinator in relation to this. Any testing will be carried out by the Guidance Counsellor and results will be made available to SEN Co-ordinator.

### **Oral and Aural Examinations**

In the case of oral examinations, school authorities are requested to liaise with examiners with regard to candidates who have special needs. The Guidance Counsellor will liaise with the SEN in this regard.

The selection and application procedure for such students begins in first year.

Any psychological assessment reports for incoming First year students are referred to the Special Needs co-ordinator who has responsibility for this area. The Guidance Counsellor co-ordinates with them in identifying students with Special Needs and appropriate measures can be put in place.

A staff meeting is convened once a year where the relevant Year Head and Tutor assess the progress of each student and to highlight any difficulties individual students may be experiencing.

### **3.6.3 Assessment of Incoming First Year Students.**

Currently the CAT4 test is administered by the Guidance Counsellor as part of the entrance test that incoming First year students are asked to take. This test was first introduced in 2018 using the on-line version. This will be continued.

The Cognitive Abilities Test 3 and the Group Reading Test 2 were used in the past.

The Home School Liaison will contact feeder Primary schools in order to identify the particular needs of students. The HSL and Guidance Counsellor will liaise with the Special Needs Coordinator in relation to students with special needs. The Special Needs co-ordinator will meet with all the relevant parties and process applications for the resources required.

### **3.7.**

#### **New Students**

Should a student enrol in the school in any other year she will be asked to take an assessment test if the results are not available from the new students' previous school.

#### **3.8 Speakers**

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

Other speakers are arranged subject to demand and in consultation with the students, staff and management.

Students will be given a feedback form in order to assess the benefit of the talk. This will then be discussed in class.

#### **Records**

The Guidance Counsellor shall keep such records as relate to his/her role.

Records are kept in two forms

- Electronically
- Hard Copy

Electronic records are kept with due regard to the provisions of the Data Protection Act.

These files will normally contain:

Examination results and graph

Inventories results and graph

Analysis of Career Inventory

Values worksheet

All files are kept in accordance with The Freedom of Information Act and Data Protection Act.

All files pertaining to an individual student kept by the Guidance Counsellor are available to be viewed by that student.

#### **3.10 Mock Interviews**

Mock Interviews are arranged subject to demand. Generally for PLC colleges and or employment opportunities. It is hoped that the Mock Interview programme be held in 2019.

These are organised by arranging a time with the Guidance Counsellor

The three main areas covered include:

- a) CV preparation
- b) Letters of Application
- c) Interview technique

### **3.11 Open Days**

#### **6th Year Students**

As part of the Careers programme in the school 6th year students are encouraged to attend Open Days that are organised by Third Level institutions. In order to minimise disruption to school life, students will be encouraged to attend Open Days that are organised at weekends. Attendance at Open Days will be confined to fifth and sixth Year students only.

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.

WIT Open Day runs in conjunction with WCFE Open Day and the Guidance Counsellor makes sure as many senior students attend as it is the closest third level college to the school.

### **3.12 Students changing a subject or changing the level of a subject**

The student may be referred to the Guidance Counsellor in the event of that student wishing to change 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 relevant subject teacher. A Change of Subject Form must be completed by the student signed by parent and subject teacher and Guidance Counsellor and returned to the student file.

### **3.13 Pastoral Care Team-meetings**

Regular monthly meetings of the Pastoral Care team are organised between the Principal, Deputy Principal Guidance Counsellor, Home School Liaison and School Completion Co-Ordinator Year Heads. Minutes of the meetings are recorded and kept on file.

## **Section 6 Role of the Guidance Counsellor**

**Name of Guidance Counsellor:** Ms. Michelle Finnegan

**Qualifications:** B.Ed Home Economics, H.Dip Guidance & Counselling

In Coláiste Cois Siúire the Guidance Counsellor is professionally trained to undertake the following tasks within the school guidance programme.

### **6.1. 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 Science

*Guidelines for Second Level Schools on the implications of Section 9 (c) of the Education*

*Act (1998), relating to students' access to appropriate guidance*

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. Support also refers to assistance in the planning and development of the SPHE programme, Transition Year Programme, Wellbeing and guidance related activities.

### **6.3. 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.

### **6.4 Information:**

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

### **6.5. 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 vocational preparation.

## **6.6 Referrals:**

“If you are a mandated person and have a concern about a child, it is your legal responsibility to make a decision as to whether the concern meets the threshold for a mandated report under the Children First Act 2015 or not. If you are satisfied that this threshold has been reached, you should clearly identify on the report that it is a mandated report made under the Children First Act.”

TUSLA, “The Agency should always be informed when a person has reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been, is being or is at risk of being abused or neglected”  
Any referral made to TUSLA is made with the support of the Principal or Deputy Principal.

The guidance counsellor also provides support for students referred to him/her by teachers, parents, and school management. The voluntary participation by the individual concerned is respected in these situations.

## **6.7 Professional Development:**

The guidance counsellor should keep abreast of on-going changes in the fields of training, education, work 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 school management and the guidance counsellor.

Presently the Guidance Counsellor is timetabled out of classes on Tuesday afternoons to attend Supervision and Guidance meetings.

## **6.8 Evaluation**

As part of this role the Guidance Counsellor will constantly review the programme to ensure it is meeting the demands of the students and their parents.

Students will be asked to complete evaluation forms at the end of the academic year.