

# Holy Faith Secondary School Clontarf

## Whole School Guidance Plan

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# 1. Philosophy and Mission Statement

This Guidance Plan has been developed in the light of the overall Mission Statement of the school.

“Holy Faith Secondary School, Clontarf aims to provide an excellent all round education in a Christian environment. Through a learning environment of faith and justice, based on respect, we seek to form integrated and self-reliant persons who will be moved to work for a better world.”

## **Our objectives are:**

To pursue excellence in all areas of school life, academic, creative and practical.

To nurture a friendly and caring environment which allows each student to develop her own natural talents and gifts.

To recognise our responsibility towards the wider community and develop a spirit of service

To offer opportunities for the spiritual development of each member of the school community.

The Guidance Department will endeavour to provide a service that will facilitate the above development of the students. This policy aims to provide clarity of purpose between and among all stakeholders in keeping with the school's mission and in compliance with current legislation.

## **What is school Guidance?**

In this plan, the term guidance will be used to refer to all guidance and counselling activities and student support services in the school. Guidance in schools 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 consequent on these choices’ (NCGE:2004). These choices can be categorised into three separate but interlinked areas:

- **Personal and Social:** covers emotional and psychological areas.
- **Educational:** concerns the academic development of the students
- **Vocational/Career:** concerns career and options after school

## **Guidance activities that assist students to make choices include:**

1. **Counselling:** the provision of a safe environment where students can explore their thoughts and feelings, learn how to cope with personal issues and learn how to take responsibility for their behaviour and actions.

2. **Assessment:** using psychometric tests and other interest inventories to help the students obtain a better understanding of themselves and to help them make educational, vocational and personal decisions.
3. **Information:** providing students with objective, factual and up-to-date information on educational and occupational opportunities as well as helping them to interpret and use this information
4. **Educational Development Programmes:** facilitating the development of study skills, exam technique as well as helping students choose subjects and levels.
5. **Personal and Social Development Programmes:** facilitating the transfer of knowledge and skills relating to a student's personal and social development, self-awareness and decision making and planning.
6. **Referrals:** There are three types of referrals
  - (a) Students may be referred to the Guidance Counsellor by an individual teacher, by a Year Head, by school management.
  - (b) Students may self-refer.
  - (c) Where an issue is beyond the scope of the school guidance service, a student may be referred to other professionals outside the school such as the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)

**Guidance Activities that assist students to make transitions include:**

**First Year Induction Programme** – helping students make a good transition from primary school to the secondary school environment

**Placement** – work experience, work shadowing and preparing students for employment

**Follow up** – following up former students regarding progression routes and destinations

**Other guidance activities that support the achievement of the aims of the school guidance programme include:**

**Consultation** – with students, parents and staff

**Feedback** – giving feedback to the Board of Management, school management and staff on the needs of individual students, groups and the school as an organisation

**Networking** – establishing links with employers, parents, past pupils, relevant Agencies and institutions to enhance guidance work with students

**Promoting change** – assisting curriculum development within the school

**Managing, organising and co-ordinating** guidance activities into a coherent programme

## **2. Aims of the School Guidance Plan**

### **Rationale**

Our rationale in relation to Guidance is primarily underpinned by Holy Faith thinking on education. This has a significant bearing on our approach to Personal, Vocational and Educational Guidance in Holy Faith, Clontarf. The Guidance Department commits to:

- Providing access to guidance in vocational and educational choices
- Providing a counselling service which will allow students to deal with any issues with which they need help
- Encouraging students and building confidence in making good choices
- Liaising with staff, parents and outside agencies in the best interests of the students.

Our policy on Guidance is also heavily influenced by the realisation that we are living in a time of enormous change. 'While being justifiably proud of its long tradition and heritage, Holy Faith, Clontarf strives consistently to adapt to the educational requirements of a rapidly changing world and has a history of commitment to curriculum innovation and development. The school is traditional, contemporary and futuristic. It draws from and relies on the Christian values of the past, works to help its students meet the challenges and reality of the present and to look to the future with maturity, confidence and hope, empowered by a broad general education. '(Website: [holyfaithclontarf.com](http://holyfaithclontarf.com)). The guidance programme of Holy Faith, Clontarf will help student develop self-awareness, resilience, career management skills and a self-directed approach to life long education.

### **Aims of the School Guidance Plan**

- For Holy Faith, Clontarf to fulfil its obligation in relation to The Education Act (1998) which states that 'a school shall use its available resources to ...ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their education and career choices and to promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students'.
- To develop further the concept of Whole School Guidance which will involve the appropriate members of the school community in the provision of a guidance service
- To assist in evaluating the School Guidance Programme and the quality of student supports.

### **3. Target Groups**

The School Guidance service is open and accessible to all students. It begins with students before they arrive at Holy Faith, Clontarf and remains a source of support for students when they leave. However, the School Guidance Programme recognises that there are students who need to have priority access to the service. These include, but are not limited to, students who;

- Are undergoing a personal difficulty
- Are affected by bereavement, separation, divorce or another loss
- Are underachieving academically
- Have issues to do with behaviour
- Are new to the school
- Have been bullied
- Have issues with school attendance.

The School Guidance Service is available to all year groups. First, Second and Third years have one timetabled SPHE class per week. Transition Years have one timetable class per week in the Computer room on a modular basis. Fifth Years have a double class of Guidance on a modular basis and Sixth Years have one timetabled class of Guidance per week. All students are welcome to meet with the Guidance Counsellor on an individual basis.

### **4. Objectives and Activities**

#### **Objectives (Senior Junior Cycle)**

It is our intention that the Junior Guidance Programme will ease the transition from primary to secondary school. We aim to ensure that personal or learning difficulties are detected as early as possible. We recognise the importance of students making friends and bonding with their class group and year group.

Before the end of first year, students will be made aware of the implications of subject choice on future educational and career options.

Through the Guidance and SPHE programmes students will begin the process of developing self-awareness and acquiring decision making skills

Students will be encouraged to establish good study habits and time management strategies

#### **Activities (Junior Cycle)**

- Incoming students will be assessed on verbal, non-verbal, numerical and spatial aptitudes

- First year students will be assessed for reading skills using the NGRT
- First year students will be introduced to the mentor system with sixth year students
- First year students will be introduced to the different elements of the Guidance service and the availability and role of the guidance counsellor will be explained to them
- All first year students will have the opportunity to meet with the Guidance Counsellor to establish contact
- First year students will have the opportunity of participating in a study skill seminar
- Students will have a weekly timetabled class for SPHE

### **Objectives (Senior Cycle)**

It is our endeavour that all senior students have frequent access to the Guidance Counsellor. We intend that these meetings will answer students' educational and vocational needs and assist them in making well informed choices about their lives.

Students will be enabled to make informed decisions concerning further education and the world of work. These decisions will be based on an exploration of their own personality, aptitudes, interests and values. Through Guidance classes, individual meetings and access to Guidance events, they will have the opportunity to explore the many options available to them after the Leaving Certificate. Students in Transition Year will be informed of the implications of subject choice on future educational and career options. Through the Work experience and Social Care elements of the Transition Year Programme, students will experience the world of work and will have an opportunity to give to their local Community

### **Activities (Senior Cycle)**

- Students will have a double class for a guidance module in Transition Year and one class per week for a guidance module in fifth year and sixth year
- The Guidance Counsellor will be available to meet individually with senior students to discuss education, career and personal matters
- Students will be given the opportunity to do the CAT4 aptitude test and to receive feedback
- Students will have the opportunity to do interest inventories, personality/temperament questionnaires and to explore the results with the Guidance Counsellor
- Students will be briefed on the application process for entry to further education and higher education in Ireland and the UK and assisted in their application
- Students will be informed of and assisted with the DARE and HEAR schemes
- Students will be assisted in applications to the USA and European universities

- Students will be educated in job-seeking skills such as CV preparation, letter writing and interview techniques
- Students in fifth year and sixth year will have the opportunity to take part in a Mock Interview in association with the Parents' Association
- Students will be invited to listen to speakers from 3<sup>rd</sup> level colleges, Colleges of Further Education, the world or business and voluntary and community enterprises
- Students will be informed of career and subject specific events and workshops and where feasible be brought as a group
- Informing students of Scholarship opportunities

## **5. Current Guidance Provision**

### **All Years**

- Meetings with Year Head, Principal and Deputy Principal, subject teachers and Learning Support teachers regarding the counselling and guidance needs of individual students.
- Individual counselling and guidance available to students experiencing personal difficulties or difficulties with study
- Each year group takes part in a one day retreat organised by the Religious Education Department
- Information dissemination to students, parents and teachers
- Referrals to and from the Guidance Counsellor
- Assessment
- Maintenance of Careers Library and Notice Board
- Visits to career exhibitions and Open Days
- Organisation of guest speakers
- Meetings with parents at parent teacher meetings and by appointment
- Anti-Bullying questionnaires

### **Incoming First Years**

- Administration of entrance assessment
- Meeting with 6<sup>th</sup> class teachers regarding students with particular needs

## **First Year**

- Meetings with Year Head and Learning Support teachers in relation to resource needs of individual students
- Meeting with 6<sup>th</sup> Class teachers to discuss the particular needs of students
- Explain the role of the Guidance Counsellor
- Administer NGRT reading test
- Discuss the subject choice system in Holy Faith, Clontarf and the factors to take into account when choosing option subjects for Junior Certificate
- Liaise with Year Head and teachers in relation to the transition from primary school to secondary school and the following areas in particular; making friends, bullying, time management, study skills
- Meeting students individually in need of one-to-one personal, vocational or educational guidance and where necessary arrange referral to outside agencies

## **Second Year**

- Liaise with Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Heads, Subject Teachers and Learning Support teachers
- Individual counselling if required
- Meet parents by appointment
- Referral to outside agency if necessary
- Liaison with outside agency e.g. CAMHS if appropriate
- SPHE programme : study skill, goal setting, motivation, friendships, bullying

## **Third Year**

- Liaise with Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Heads, Subject Teachers and Learning Support teachers
- Individual counselling if required
- Meet parents by appointment
- Referral to outside agency if necessary
- Liaison with outside agency e.g. CAMHS if appropriate
- SPHE programme : effective study , healthy life-style, body-image, decision making, stress and anxiety, preparation for exams
- Promote participation in evening supervised study for third year students

## **Transition Year**

- Liaise with Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Heads, Subject Teachers and Learning Support teachers
- Individual counselling if required
- Meet parents by appointment
- Referral to outside agency if necessary
- Liaison with outside agency e.g. CAMHS if appropriate
- Guidance module in the computer room where students become familiar with the REACH+ Programme
- Subject Choice – presentation to parents and students by Guidance Counsellor and to students by subject teachers and individual appointments with Guidance Counsellor
- Administration of CAT4
- Return of CAT4 results and meetings with students and parents where appropriate
- Work Experience
- Community Care placements
- Alert students to college outreach programmes such as RCSI mini-med, Trinity Science and Law Programmes

## **Fifth Year**

- Liaise with Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Heads, Subject Teachers and Learning Support teachers
- Individual counselling if required
- Meet parents by appointment
- Referral to outside agency if necessary
- Liaison with outside agency e.g. CAMHS if appropriate
- Study Skills seminar
- A double class period per week
- Speakers from colleges of Higher and Further Education
- Promote participation in evening supervised study for fifth years

## **Sixth Year**

- Liaise with Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Heads, Subject Teachers and Learning Support teachers
- Individual counselling if required
- Referral to outside agency if necessary
- Liaison with outside agency e.g. CAMHS if appropriate
- Timetabled class each week
- Meeting with year group at weekly Assembly
- Promote participation in evening supervised study for sixth years
- Individual meetings with students in relation to options after the Leaving Certificate
- Meetings with parents at parent teacher meets and individually where appropriate
- Meetings with students, parents and teachers in relation to DARE application
- Liaison with teachers and Principal in relation to predicted grades for UCAS application

## **Past Pupils**

Follow up with students on post Leaving Certificate choices

Meeting with students who are unhappy with their course or who may wish to apply for DARE

# **6. Meeting with students**

## **Student Guidance/Counselling Appointment Procedure**

- The Guidance department operates an Open Door Policy where students are encouraged to make appointments with the Guidance Counsellor about any issues that may concern them
- Students may be referred by a Teacher, Year Head, Principal or Deputy Principal or may self-refer.
- When speaking with parents about concerns, the Guidance Counsellor encourages the parent to help the student to initiate an appointment
- Appointments may also be requested by parents/guardians and these are facilitated as soon as possible
- An appointment slip is given to the student, showing the date and time of the appointment
- Students are informed of confidentiality and the limits of confidentiality

- Records are kept in a locked filing cabinet
- The Guidance Counsellor operates under the Code of Ethics of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors (appendix )
- The Guidance Counsellor attends five supervision sessions provided by the DES
- The Guidance Counsellor informs the Designated Liaison Person (Principal) or in her absence the Deputy Liaison Person (Deputy Principal) of any concerns in relation to Child Protection issues.

### **Confidentiality Statement made to students**

“What we talk about here will remain confidential, (do you know what confidential means – it means that I won’t talk to anyone else about our conversation unless you agree to it), but there are some times when I have to tell or talk to someone else about what you tell me.

These times are:

- 1. If you tell me you are going to hurt or harm yourself**
- 2. If you tell me you are going to hurt or harm someone else,**
- 3. If you tell me that you are being hurt or harmed or abused in any way.**

I will do this to make sure you are safe and not in any danger. Do you understand? Have you any questions?

## **7. Assessment and Testing In Holy Faith Clontarf**

### **Statement on the use of Assessment and Testing**

We recognise the importance of psychometric testing and how it can help students and their parents make informed choices about their education. We are careful that there is always a clear intention in relation to testing and that testing is administered by a qualified person under testing conditions. We are very careful to ensure confidentiality of results, while sharing results with staff and parents for the best interest of the students. All test materials are stored in a locked cupboard. Some of the reasons for the use of Psychometric tests are:

- To establish baseline data in relation to a student’s aptitude
- To identify students who may benefit from additional support or Reasonable Accommodation in State exams
- To inform consultations with the NEPS psychologist where necessary
- To assist in the identification of students who may need to be referred to an outside professional or agency for further assessment

## **Entrance Assessment for Incoming First Year Students**

CAT4 Level E is used for assessing incoming students. The results are examined well before the students enter in September in order to best plan for their educational needs.

### **NGRT**

The NGRT is administered to first years and repeated at the end of the year or in second Year. This was chosen because it provides a reading age as well as a standard age score. Students whose reading age is lower than their chronological age are referred to the Learning Support Team.

### **WRAT**

If requested by NEPS psychologist or to apply for Reasonable Accommodation in Exams (RACE)

### **Transition Year Students**

CAT4 is administered in the second term. The results and an explanation are posted to parents. The CAT4 is explained at a talk for parents in relation to its usefulness in choosing subjects for Leaving Certificate. Students are invited to discuss their profile individually with the Guidance Counsellor.

## **8. Whole School Guidance**

The Guidance Counsellor, as the trained professional has primary responsibility for Career Guidance. but other members of staff play a significant part in delivering: educational guidance and personal social guidance as outlined in 'Well-Being in Post-Primary Schools: Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention 2013' In Holy Faith, the deliverance of the guidance programme is dependent on the strong personal and professional links with school management, staff, parents and students. It is a whole school activity and cannot be delivered by one person. The main participants and their general roles are as follows

### **Principal**

The Principal oversees the Whole School Programme of which guidance and counselling is an important component. The Principal works with the Board of Management in relation to student welfare.

### **Deputy Principal**

The Deputy Principal is in daily contact with students and may refer a student who she thinks may benefit from an appointment. The Deputy Principal is involved in subject choice from a timetabling perspective and will refer students in relation to subject choice and also in relation to choosing levels for Leaving Certificate.

### **Guidance Counsellor**

The school sees guidance as a priority in the school and strives to provide for the guidance needs of all pupils, in line with the document 'Guidelines for Second-Level Schools on the

Implications of Section 9(c) of the Education Act 1998, Relating to Students' Access to Appropriate Guidance (DES,2005)

### **Year Heads**

Student support, UCAS applications, DARE applications,

### **Leaving Cert Vocational Programme Teachers (LCVP)**

REACH+ programme, work experience, career investigation

### **SPHE**

1<sup>st</sup> year induction programme, Friends programme, study skills,

### **Subject Teachers**

Subject teachers interact on a daily basis with students. They focus primarily on academic areas but also employ a pastoral approach to positively affect student welfare. They too will also make referrals when deemed necessary

### **TY Coordinator**

Work Experience, Subject Choice, Career Workshops

### **Learning support**

RACE applications, DARE applications,

**Others with whom the Guidance Counsellor works are:**

**Parents**

The Guidance Counsellor is available at all staff meetings, by telephone and by appointment to meet with parents. Parents are also kept up to date with what is going on through talks on the options open to students after school, subject choice, and correspondence in relation to Open Days and workshops that students may be interested in.

**Student Council**

Liaise with student council on relevant issues

**Amber Flag Team**

Liaise with Amber Flag committee to promote positive mental health and wellbeing

**Primary schools**

The local feeder school is visited by the Guidance Counsellor and 1<sup>st</sup> Year Head as early as possible in the first term. This can help us to get to know the needs of individual students better.

**National Education Psychological Service (NEPS)**

The Guidance Counsellor meets at least twice a year with the NEPS psychologist. This is a useful forum where we can seek advice and guidance on individual students or issues in relation to RACE, DARE or psychological assessments.

**Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)**

Liaise with CAMHS to support students who are attending the service.

## **9. Review and Monitoring Procedures**

**Monitoring Procedures:**

The Guidance Counsellor meets with the Deputy Principal, Principal, Year Heads, and Learning Support Teachers on a daily basis. She attends staff meetings and parent teacher meetings individually with parents/guardians. She meets with the NEPS psychologist at least twice a year with the Learning Support teachers.

**Review Procedures**

Review is a very important part of the school guidance programme. A school needs to know the extent to which the learning objectives have been achieved and the factors that facilitated or hindered that achievement. It is also important to identify unplanned outcomes, unmet needs and possibly new/emerging target groups. This helps with forward planning so that the school's guidance programme remains relevant to the needs of its target groups. Some of the ways that this takes place are

**1. Self-Appraisal Systems**

**The guidance counsellor has a self-appraisal form, whereby she can keep records of: (appendix)**

What part of the job has been most successful?

What aspects of work give the most satisfaction and dissatisfaction?

What prevents one from achieving what one had intended to?

What responsibilities in the job description is one not carrying out?

How well one has done in achieving targets

Are there aspects of one's work that are not in the job description and should be?

Are there any changes in the school organisation which might be of assistance to the guidance counsellor?

## **2. Record Keeping**

Record keeping is of paramount importance. Detailed records are kept of every personal interview with a student or parent. Detailed diary records are kept of all activities and appointments. These are reviewed periodically with a view to monitoring the guidance programme and ultimately making it efficient and accessible.

## **3. Student Questionnaire**

First Year students are given a questionnaire about what they like, dislike, find difficult about Secondary School and what might be done differently

Transition Year students complete a Guidance Interview questionnaire as part of the REACH+ Programme

The Guidance Counsellor monitors students' progress in the REACH+ Programme in the Administrators section of the site

Sixth Years give input on their specific needs for the year and make suggestions for the Guidance Programme

The policy will be reviewed annually

Views and experience of students, parents and teachers will be surveyed in relation to the aims and objectives of the Guidance Plan.

## **10. Resources**

### **School Resources**

Board of Management and Principal

Deputy Principal

Full Time Guidance Counsellor

Year Heads

SPHE teachers

Subject teachers

Parents' Association

Guidance Prefects

Student Council

Amber Flag Committee

Guidance Office with secure filing cabinets, computer and internet facilities

Careers Library

Access to Computer Room

Dedicated Guidance Notice Board

### **Community Resources**

Work Placements

Community Care Placements

Visiting Speakers

Local Primary and Secondary Schools

Colleges of Further Education

Colleges of Higher Education

Engineers Ireland STEM outreach programmes

National Centre for Guidance in Education

Institute of Guidance Counsellors

## **11. Action Plan 2015-2016**

**The following has been identified as areas that need to be addressed for the year 2015-2016**

Development of Digital Testing

Linking Assessment results from GL Assessment to SIMS

Links with past pupils for contact database

FRIENDS programme, training and implementation

Website: Updating Guidance section of website.

## **12. Linked Policies**

The Whole School Guidance Plan is linked to the following policies:

Acceptable Use Policy – ICT

Admissions Policy

Anti-Bullying Policy

Attendance Policy and Strategies

Code of Behaviour

Critical Incident Policy

Data Protection Policy

Special Education Needs Policy

SPHE Policy

## **13. Appendices**

Schemes of Work for TY, fifth year and first year

Letters to Parents

PowerPoint presentation of talks to parents on CAO and Subject choice

Sample letter to parents oin relation to Guidance outing

Copy of Confidentiality Statement

Guidance Counsellor CPD

IGC Code of ethics