



## ***Holy Faith Secondary School***

***Clontarf***



## **Whole School Guidance Plan**

**2026/27**

## Holy Faith Secondary School

Belgrove Road, Clontarf, Dublin 3, D03 R528

T: 01-8331507 E: [admin@holyfaithclontarf.com](mailto:admin@holyfaithclontarf.com)

**Principal:** Audrey Carty

**Deputy Principal:** Mary Molloy



### Our school

Holy Faith Secondary School, Clontarf, is a voluntary secondary school for girls. Located in north Dublin, we currently have an enrolment of 657 students.

[www.holyfaithclontarf.com](http://www.holyfaithclontarf.com)

### 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 and 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.

### 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.
- We continue to grow as a caring, respectful and progressive community which supports the development of the whole person.

The Guidance Department will endeavour to provide a service that will facilitate the above development of the students. All students are treated as individuals with unique strengths and the school aims to support the development of the whole person. 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 in a guidance context**
- **Educational**
- **Vocational/Career**

The Guidance Counsellor's time is allocated as follows: approximately 33% timetabled classroom guidance (1<sup>st</sup>, TY, 5th, 6th modules), 67% for group work, individual appointments, SST work, and coordination.

This plan embeds the four career-management skills outlined in the National Strategic Framework for Lifelong Guidance (2024–2030): self-awareness, opportunity awareness, decision-making, and transition skills. Students develop these progressively from First Year through Wellbeing, subject choice, work experience, and senior cycle guidance modules.

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

1. **Counselling**
2. **Testing**
3. **Information**
4. **Educational Development Programmes**
5. **Personal and Social Development Programmes**
6. **Referrals**

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)).

**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 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.

The guidance programme of Holy Faith, Clontarf will help student develop self-awareness, resilience, career management skills and a self-directed approach to lifelong education through the following areas:

- **Personal and Social:** covers emotional and psychological areas involving self-awareness, decision making skills, planning, time management, coping strategies etc
- **Educational:** concerns the academic development of the students involving subject choice, subject level, study skills, psychometric testing etc
- **Vocational/Career:** concerns career and options after school involving educational and career opportunities, career research, career and course information, work experience, interview preparation.

The circular (referencing the **National Strategic Framework for Lifelong Guidance 2024–2030**) emphasises:

- **Career-management skills** and lifelong career mobility (not just CAO/HE)
- **Parity of esteem** for all pathways: apprenticeships, FET, PLC, employment.
- **Employer engagement** and world-of-work exposure

We, in Holy Faith Secondary School, strive to emphasise these features through our Junior Cycle Guidance Related Learning, TY Programme and Senior Cycle Guidance lessons.

### **Rationale of the School Guidance Plan**

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 guidance 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.
  - a) 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 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 through the student support team or by a parent.
  - b) Students may self-refer



- c) Where a student requires specialist support the Guidance Counsellor may refer students to appropriate outside agencies as advised by NEPS psychologist.

## **A CONTINUUM OF SUPPORT FOR WHOLE SCHOOL GUIDANCE**

A continuum of support model is applied to the school guidance programme. In applying the continuum, the whole school guidance programme aims to meet the needs of students along a continuum, from a whole school approach to group and individualised approaches. The continuum model can be applied to guidance as follows:

**Guidance for All** – provided to all students to support personal & social, educational, and career development, and students making transitions (incoming first years, junior cycle to senior cycle and from senior cycle into apprenticeships, FET (Further Education Training), Higher Education and employment). The guidance counsellor as the specialist has a key role to play in coordinating the planning and delivery of the whole school guidance programme and in the provision of guidance to students. A whole school approach is employed in delivering the learning and teaching activities of the school guidance programme which include, career education programmes, SPHE and Wellbeing in Junior Cycle, guidance modules and work experience/placement provided as part of senior cycle programmes (TYP and LCW).

**Guidance for Some** – provided to specific groups of students to support personal & social, educational and career development and transition making. Such groups of students will typically include, for example, students in senior cycle, especially 6th year, who will benefit from group and one-to-one guidance counselling to support educational and career decision making, and students who are making transitions. Some students may require additional and more intensive support. Group/one-to-one guidance counselling will require the expertise of specialist school staff, such as the guidance counsellor working in collaboration with the student support team, SPHE teacher, year heads, and class tutors.

**Guidance For A Few** – Students may require support in meeting their developmental needs and when they experience personal crises. Some students may also require more intensive support as they make transitions and important decisions during their time in post-primary schools. This support will require the expertise of specialised school staff with the necessary knowledge, skills and competences to respond to the needs of these students and will involve the guidance counsellor, and other school staff who have been trained in meeting the needs of vulnerable students and those who may have additional needs. In the event that the student requires more intensive support, referral to external agencies and supports can be. In the event of a protracted referral the guidance counsellor/staff member may need to provide continued support to the student.

### **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.

**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 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

## Objectives and Activities

### Year 1 (Junior Cycle)

| <b>Activity</b>            | <b>Provided by</b>                  | <b>Guidance for All/Some/Few</b> |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Annual Information Evening | Teachers, First Year student guides | All                              |

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|                                                                                                   |                                                             |      |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| CAT4 assessment (verbal, non-verbal, numerical, spatial)                                          | Guidance Counsellor                                         | All  |
| Information-sharing session with feeder primary schools                                           | SEN Coordinator                                             | Some |
| Meeting for parents of incoming First Years with SEN (Jan/Feb)                                    | SLT                                                         | Some |
| Information Evening for parents of incoming First Years                                           | SLT                                                         | All  |
| First Year Induction (Year Head, Guidance Counsellor, Principal, Deputy Principal, tour, mentors) | Year Head, Guidance Counsellor, Principal, Deputy Principal | All  |
| Guidance-related learning within Wellbeing Programme (SPHE, PE, wellbeing)                        | Guidance Counsellor Wellbeing team                          | All  |
| Extracurricular activities                                                                        | Wellbeing Team                                              | All  |
| Trying all option subjects for the year                                                           | All staff                                                   | All  |
| Parents' meeting regarding option choice (March/April)                                            | SLT Guidance Counsellor                                     | All  |
| Parent-teacher meeting (post-option choice)                                                       | All Staff                                                   | All  |
| Sixth Year student mentors for First Year tutor classes                                           | Sixth Year student mentors                                  | Some |
| Year Head liaison with parents, subject teachers, tutors, Guidance Counsellor                     | Year Head                                                   | Some |
| Counselling (referral or self-referral)                                                           | Guidance Counsellor                                         | Few  |
| Individual meetings (students/parents) – personal, educational, career                            | Guidance Counsellor                                         | Few  |
| Referrals to outside agencies (via NEPS psychologist)                                             | Guidance Counsellor/NEPS                                    | Few  |



|                                                                                             |                                                 |      |                           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|------|---------------------------|
| Drama workshops on Friendship (October)                                                     | Drama facilitators                              | All  | www.holyfaithclontarf.com |
| Weekly assemblies                                                                           | Year Heads                                      | All  |                           |
| Anti-bullying questionnaire                                                                 | Year Heads                                      | All  |                           |
| Mental Health Week                                                                          | Guidance and Wellbeing Teams (speakers invited) | All  |                           |
| School outing                                                                               | Year Head                                       | All  |                           |
| Active Schools Week (May)                                                                   | PE Department                                   | All  |                           |
| Annual retreat                                                                              | Religious Education Department                  | All  |                           |
| Introduction to Guidance service elements                                                   | Guidance Counsellor                             | All  |                           |
| Meeting with Guidance Counsellor to establish contact                                       | Guidance Counsellor                             | All  |                           |
| Study skills seminar                                                                        | Guidance Counsellor Facilitator                 | All  |                           |
| Progress reports (January and June)                                                         | All Staff                                       | All  |                           |
| Liaison on transition topics (friendship, bullying, time management, study skills)          | Year Head and teachers                          | Some |                           |
| Individual guidance meetings (personal, vocational, educational) with referral where needed | Guidance Counsellor                             | Few  |                           |

### **Year 2 (Junior Cycle)**

| <b>Activity</b>                                                                                | <b>Provided by</b>                                          | <b>Guidance for all/some/few</b> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Second Year introductory meeting (Year Head, Guidance Counsellor, Principal, Deputy Principal) | Year Head, Guidance Counsellor, Principal, Deputy Principal | All                              |

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|                                                                               |                                |                                                                              |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Continuation with suite of Wellbeing Subjects                                 | All Staff                      | All                                                                          |
| Extracurricular activities                                                    | AP2 post-holder                | All <a href="http://www.holyfaithclontarf.com">www.holyfaithclontarf.com</a> |
| Year Head liaison with parents, subject teachers, tutors, Guidance Counsellor | Year Head                      | Some                                                                         |
| Counselling (referral or self-referral)                                       | Guidance Counsellor            | Few                                                                          |
| Individual meetings (students/parents) – personal, educational, career        | Guidance Counsellor            | Few                                                                          |
| Referrals to outside agencies                                                 | Guidance Counsellor            | Few                                                                          |
| Weekly assemblies                                                             | Year Head                      | All                                                                          |
| Anti-bullying questionnaire                                                   | Year Head                      | All                                                                          |
| Mental Health Week                                                            | School (speakers invited)      | All                                                                          |
| School outing                                                                 | Year Head, Tutors              | All                                                                          |
| Annual retreat                                                                | Religious Education Department | All                                                                          |
| Active Schools Week (May)                                                     | PE Department                  | All                                                                          |
| Progress reports (December and June)                                          | All Staff                      | All                                                                          |

### Year 3 (Junior Cycle)

| Activity                                                                                      | Provided by                                                 | Guidance for all/some/few |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Third Year introductory meeting (Year Head, Guidance Counsellor, Principal, Deputy Principal) | Year Head, Guidance Counsellor, Principal, Deputy Principal | All                       |

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|                                                                               |                                |      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------|
| Continuation with suite of Wellbeing Subjects                                 | All Staff                      | All  |
| Extracurricular activities                                                    | AP2 post-holder                | All  |
| Year Head liaison with parents, subject teachers, tutors, Guidance Counsellor | Year Head                      | Some |
| Counselling (referral or self-referral)                                       | Guidance Counsellor            | Few  |
| Individual meetings (students/parents) – personal, educational, career        | Guidance Counsellor            | Few  |
| Referrals to outside agencies                                                 | Guidance Counsellor            | Few  |
| Supervised study                                                              | Deputy Principal               | Some |
| Weekly assemblies                                                             | Year Head                      | All  |
| Anti-bullying questionnaire                                                   | Year Head                      | All  |
| Mental Health Week                                                            | School (speakers invited)      | All  |
| School outing                                                                 | Year Head and Tutors           | All  |
| Annual retreat                                                                | Religious Education Department | All  |
| Active Schools Week (May)                                                     | PE Department                  | All  |
| Progress reports (December and March)                                         | All staff                      | All  |
| Transition Year parent meeting (March) outlining TY programme                 | TY Co-Ordinator and Year Head  | All  |
| RACE (Reasonable Accommodations for Certificate Examinations) processing      | SEN Department                 | Some |



## Transition Year

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| Activity                                                                            | Provided by                             | Guidance for All/Some/Few |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Transition Year Induction Day                                                       | All Staff                               | All                       |
| Bonding trip to Carlingford Adventure Centre                                        | Class tutor/Year Head/ TY Co-Ordinator  | All                       |
| Work experience                                                                     | All Staff                               | All                       |
| Aptitude Tests (CAT4)                                                               | Guidance Counsellor                     | All                       |
| Community Care Work Experience                                                      | All Staff                               | All                       |
| Folder of excellence, certificates of merit, distinction and participation          | All Staff                               | All                       |
| Report at the end of year                                                           | All Staff                               | All                       |
| Graduation in May                                                                   | All Staff                               | All                       |
| Leaving Certificate subject information day                                         | All Staff                               | All                       |
| Subject tasters in class                                                            | All Staff                               | All                       |
| Job-seeking skills education (CV preparation, letter writing, interview techniques) | All Staff                               | All                       |
| SPHE - health and wellbeing, work safety, personal choices                          | Wellbeing Team                          | All                       |
| Business - enterprise and mini company                                              | Business Team                           | Some                      |
| Student Enterprise Awards                                                           | All Staff                               | Some                      |
| Retreat organised by the Religious Education Department                             | Religious Education Department          | All                       |
| Trip to Worldskills Exhibition                                                      | TY Co-Ordinator and Guidance Counsellor | All                       |

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|                                                                                 |                          |      |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|------|
| Fast Friends Programme with Central Remedial Clinic                             | Link Teacher             | Some |
| Paired Reading Programme with Central Remedial Clinic                           | Link Teacher             | Some |
| Social Justice Programme                                                        | All Staff                | Some |
| RSE module for 8 weeks                                                          | RSE Team                 | All  |
| Guidance module (one lesson per week)                                           | Guidance Counsellor      | All  |
| Individual meetings with Guidance Counsellor (education, career, personal)      | Guidance Counsellor      | Few  |
| Interest inventories                                                            | Guidance Counsellor      | All  |
| Counsellor addresses issues of concern                                          | Guidance Counsellor      | Few  |
| Counselling by referral or self-referral                                        | Guidance Counsellor      | Few  |
| Individual meetings between students/parents and Guidance Counsellor on request | Guidance Counsellor      | Few  |
| Mental Health Week                                                              | All Staff                | All  |
| Active Schools Week (May)                                                       | PE Department            | All  |
| Progress reports (December and June)                                            | All Staff                | All  |
| Parents' meeting regarding Leaving Certificate option choice (March/April)      | SLT, Guidance Counsellor | All  |
| Information for students and parents on Leaving Certificate option choice       | Guidance Counsellor      | All  |

### Fifth Year

| Activity | Provided by | Guidance for All/Some/Few |
|----------|-------------|---------------------------|
|----------|-------------|---------------------------|

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|                                                                                                                          |                             |      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------|
| Choice of traditional Leaving Certificate or Leaving Cert with LCW                                                       | All Staff                   | All  |
| LCW lessons (2 periods/week)                                                                                             | LCW Team                    | Some |
| LCW work experience/shadowing (one week)                                                                                 | LCW Team                    | Some |
| RSE module for 8 weeks                                                                                                   | RSE Team                    | All  |
| Period of PE/Study/LCW per week                                                                                          | Teachers                    | All  |
| Learning or emotional issues addressed via School Student Support Team (Year Heads, Guidance Counsellor, SEN Department) | School Student Support Team | Few  |
| Year Head liaison with parents, subject teachers, SEN team and Guidance Counsellor                                       | Year Head                   | Some |
| Individual meetings with Guidance Counsellor (personal, educational, career)                                             | Guidance Counsellor         | Few  |
| Counselling by referral or self-referral                                                                                 | Guidance Counsellor         | Few  |
| Referrals to outside agencies                                                                                            | Guidance Counsellor         | Few  |
| Guest speakers (voluntary organisations, local enterprises, financial institutions, colleges)                            | All Staff                   | All  |
| Supervised study                                                                                                         | Deputy Principal            | Some |
| Study skills workshops                                                                                                   | Year Heads                  | All  |
| Assemblies (positive behaviour, ethos, feedback, activities)                                                             | Year Heads                  | All  |
| Mental Health Week                                                                                                       | All Staff                   | All  |
| Higher Options day at RDS                                                                                                | Guidance Counsellor         | All  |

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|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-----|
| Meeting held by Guidance Counsellor for parents regarding post-school options, including CAO | Guidance Counsellor | All |
| Timetabled Careers class                                                                     | Guidance Counsellor | All |
| Progress reports (December and June)                                                         | All Staff           | All |
| Parent-teacher meeting (January)                                                             | All Staff           | All |

**Sixth Year**

| Activity                                                                                                                 | Provided by                 | Guidance for All/Some/Few |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| LCW lessons (2 periods)                                                                                                  | LCW Team                    | Some                      |
| PE (one period/week)                                                                                                     | PE Department               | All                       |
| Guidance module                                                                                                          | Guidance Counsellor         | All                       |
| Year Head liaison with parents, subject teachers, form teachers, Guidance Counsellor                                     | Year Head                   | Some                      |
| Learning or emotional issues addressed via School Student Support Team (Year Heads, Guidance Counsellor, SEN Department) | School Student Support Team | Few                       |
| Study skills workshops                                                                                                   | Year Heads                  | All                       |
| Parent-teacher meeting (November)                                                                                        | All Staff                   | All                       |
| Progress reports (December and March)                                                                                    | All Staff                   | All                       |
| Year Head liaison with parents, subject teachers, SEN department, Guidance Counsellor                                    | Year Head                   | Some                      |
| Individual meetings with Guidance Counsellor (personal, educational, career)                                             | Guidance Counsellor         | Few                       |

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|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|------|
| Counselling by referral or self-referral                                                      | Guidance Counsellor | Few  |
| Referrals to outside agencies                                                                 | Guidance Counsellor | Few  |
| Assemblies (positive behaviour, ethos, feedback, activities)                                  | Year Head           | All  |
| Students' Council participation                                                               | AP2 post-holder     | Some |
| Mental Health Week                                                                            | All Staff           | All  |
| Higher Options Exhibition                                                                     | Guidance Counsellor | All  |
| Visiting speakers (HEIs, CFEs, business, voluntary/community enterprises)                     | All Staff           | All  |
| Meeting held by Guidance Counsellor for parents regarding post-school options, including CAO  | Guidance Counsellor | All  |
| Briefing on application process for further/higher education (Ireland and UK) with assistance | Guidance Counsellor | All  |
| Information and assistance with DARE and HEAR schemes                                         | Guidance Counsellor | Some |
| Assistance with applications to UK/USA and European universities                              | Guidance Counsellor | Some |
| Encouragement to attend Open Days (Saturdays); schedule on Careers Noticeboard                | All Staff           | All  |
| Important dates/deadlines announced over intercom and at assemblies                           | Year Head           | All  |
| Reminders sent to parents via text, app and website                                           | All Staff           | All  |

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|                                                                                                          |                                |      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------|
| Sixth Year Retreat                                                                                       | Religious Education Department | All  |
| Graduation Ceremony (May)                                                                                | All Staff                      | All  |
| Informing students of career/subject-specific events and workshops, with group attendance where feasible | All Staff                      | All  |
| Informing students of Scholarship opportunities                                                          | Guidance Counsellor            | All  |
| Leaving Certificate Reasonable Accommodations processing                                                 | SEN Department                 | Some |
| DARE scheme facilitation                                                                                 | Guidance Counsellor            | Some |

### Current Guidance Provision

#### All Years

- 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
- Assessments
- Maintenance of Careers Library and Notice Board
- Visits to career exhibitions and Open Days and promotion of on-line resources
- Organisation of guest speakers
- Meetings with parents at parent teacher meetings and by appointment
- Anti-Bullying questionnaires



### **Incoming First Years**

- Meeting with 6<sup>th</sup> class teachers regarding students with an identified need in principal feeder school and on a case-by-case basis.

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### **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
- Discuss the subject choice system in Holy Faith, Clontarf and the factors to consider 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
- Liaise with Wellbeing team in relation to Guidance related learning component of Wellbeing

### **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 skills, goal setting, motivation, friendships, bullying
- Liaise with Wellbeing team in relation to Guidance related learning component of Wellbeing

### **Third Year**

- Liaise with Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Heads, Subject Teachers and Learning Support teachers
- Liaise with Wellbeing team in relation to Guidance related learning component of Wellbeing
- 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 lifestyle, body-image, decision making, stress and anxiety, preparation for exams



- Promote participation in evening supervised study for third year students

### Transition Year

[www.holyfaithclontarf.com](http://www.holyfaithclontarf.com)

- 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 lesson 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 Aptitude tests
- Return of Aptitude test 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
- Careers Evening

### 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
- Speakers from colleges of Higher and Further Education where feasible
- Promote participation in evening supervised study for fifth years
- Timetabled lesson per week for 20 weeks

### 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
- Meeting with year group at 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 and HEAR applications
- Liaison with teachers and Principal in relation to predicted grades for UCAS application
- Timetabled lesson per week for 10 weeks or small group withdrawal

### **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

## **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, Student Support Team, Parent 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
- 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
- The Guidance Counsellor attends six 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 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.** [www.holymfaithclontarf.com](http://www.holymfaithclontarf.com)

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

## **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, Reasonable Accommodation in State exams and to support a DARE application
- 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

### **Assessment for First Year Students**

CAT4 Level E is used for assessing incoming students. The results are examined to best plan for their educational needs.

### **WRAT/WIATT**

If requested by NEPS psychologist or to apply for Reasonable Accommodation in Exams (RACE) and to support DARE applications.

### **Transition Year Students**

Aptitude test is administered in the second term. The results and an explanation are posted to parents on the school app. The Aptitude test is explained at a talk for parents in relation to its usefulness in choosing subjects for Leaving Certificate.

## **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' 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:

### **Board of Management**

The Board of Management has a responsibility to ensure that the provision and practice of guidance in the school is of the highest possible standard. The Board of Management manages the school in accordance with the Education Act (1998) and the Articles of Management for Voluntary Secondary Schools. Each school is required to comply with the Education Act (1998) and provide students with "access to appropriate guidance".

### **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 in relation to choosing levels for Leaving Certificate.

### **Guidance Counsellor**

The Guidance Counsellor has a specialist role within the whole-school approach and collaborates with teachers, Year Heads, SEN staff, school leadership and relevant external agencies to ensure the provision for the guidance needs of all pupils. This is 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, assistance with UCAS applications, DARE applications,

### **Wellbeing Co-ordinator**

Co-ordination of Whole School Wellbeing Team

### **LCW Teachers**

## **Holy Faith Secondary School**

Belgrove Road, Clontarf, Dublin 3, D03 R528

T: 01-8331507 E: [admin@holyfaithclontarf.com](mailto:admin@holyfaithclontarf.com)

**Principal:** Audrey Carty

**Deputy Principal:** Mary Molloy



REACH+ programme, work experience, career investigation

### **SPHE**

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

[www.holyfaithclontarf.com](http://www.holyfaithclontarf.com)

### **Subject Teachers**

Subject teachers interact daily 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

### **Programme Coordinator**

Work Experience, Subject Choice, Career Workshops, Work Shadowing

### **Learning support**

RACE applications and testing

### **Student Support Team**

Team meets weekly and consists of Guidance Counsellor, Member of SEN team, Year Heads, Wellbeing Co-ordinator and Principal/Deputy Principal

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

#### **Parents**

The Guidance Counsellor is available at parent teacher 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

#### **National Education Psychological Service (NEPS)**

The Guidance Counsellor meets with the NEPS psychologist as required. 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.



## Review and Monitoring Procedures

### Monitoring Procedures:

[www.holyfaithclontarf.com](http://www.holyfaithclontarf.com)

The Guidance Counsellor meets with the Deputy Principal, Principal, Year Heads, and Learning Support Teachers as required. She attends staff meetings and parent teacher meetings individually with parents/guardians. She meets with the NEPS psychologist, visiting teacher services as appropriate

### 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

### Self-Appraisal Systems

The guidance counsellor has a self-appraisal form, whereby she can keep records of:  
What part of the job has been most successful?

What prevents her from achieving what she had intended to?

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

How well she has done in achieving targets

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

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

### Record Keeping

Record keeping is of paramount importance. Records are kept of every personal interview with a student or parent. 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.

Records are kept in two forms:

- Electronically, or
- Hard copy.

Guidance counselling notes are stored securely in line with IN 0003/2024, GDPR, and school Data Protection Policy. Notes are retained until the student turns 25 or 7 years post-exit and destroyed securely thereafter. Transfer protocols comply with DES and Teaching Council guidance.



## **Student Questionnaire**

Transition Year students complete a Guidance Interview questionnaire as part of the [www.holyfaithclontarf.com](http://www.holyfaithclontarf.com) REACH+ Programme

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

*Review & Evaluation:* "This plan will be reviewed annually by the Guidance Team and Board of Management. Student/parent surveys and focus groups will inform the next iteration (Term 3 each year)

## **Resources**

### **School Resources**

Guidance Counsellor's office

Phone/email address

Dedicated page on school website

Dedicated Guidance Team for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Year students

Dedicated chat facility on digital learning platform (Teams)

Computer networked to the main school network

Printer

Broadband available in office

Filing cabinet

Guidance Notice Board

Information relating to outside agencies

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

Student Support Team

Parents' Association

Student Council

### **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 (ICG)



## Action Plan 2026/27

The following have been identified as priorities that will be addressed for the year 2026/27

- **Audit current provision**

Map what guidance is already happening (formal/informal, timetabled/embedded), identify gaps, and consult students/staff/parents on perceived needs.

- **Strengthen wellbeing & transitions**

First Years: structured induction, peer mentoring, regular check-ins.

Assess this considering a shortened induction window this year

Our Guidance Team comprises: Guidance Counsellor (coordinator), Year Heads, SPHE/Wellbeing Coordinator, TY Coordinator, LCW Coordinator, and SEN Coordinator. The team meet once per term to review provision and plan events

## Linked Policies

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

Acceptable Use Policy – Internet Usage Policy

Admissions Policy

Anti-Bullying Policy

Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

Code of Behaviour

Critical Incident Policy

Data Protection Policy

Special Education Needs Policy

Wellbeing Policy

Date of next review: October 2027

This plan was adopted by the Board of Management on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2026

# Holy Faith Secondary School

Belgrove Road, Clontarf, Dublin 3, D03 R528

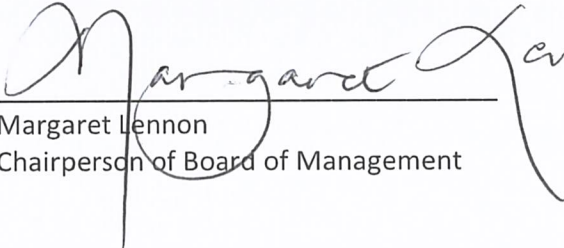
T: 01-8331507 E: [admin@holyfaithclontarf.com](mailto:admin@holyfaithclontarf.com)

**Principal:** Audrey Carty

**Deputy Principal:** Mary Molloy



Signed:

  
Margaret Lennon

Chairperson of Board of Management

  
Audrey Carty

Principal

[www.holyfaithclontarf.com](http://www.holyfaithclontarf.com)