

Whole School Guidance Plan

Our school Mission Statement



St. Aidan's C.B.S. promotes the Edmund Rice Charter through nurturing *faith*, promoting *partnership*, excelling in *teaching*, creating *community* and inspiring *leadership*.

Our school

St. Aidan's C.B.S. is a voluntary secondary school for boys. Located in north Dublin, we currently have an enrolment of over 700 students.

Rationale

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

Scope

The Guidance Plan involves all aspects of school life 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.

Members of this team include, among others:

- School Management
- Year Heads
- Class Tutors
- Subject Teachers and Departments
- Special Needs Co-ordinator
- Special Needs Assistants
- Programmes Co-ordinator
- Planning and Development Co-ordinator
- Parents
- School Maintenance Staff
- Support Personnel

The Guidance Plan is a reflection of this teamwork.

Contents

Section A: Statement of Guidance Policy	Pg. 4
Section B: The Guidance Programme	Pg. 7
Section C: Current Guidance Procedures	Pg. 26
Section D: Current Policies relating to Guidance	Pg. 35
Section E: Guidance Resources	Pg. 36
Section F: The Role of the Guidance Counsellor	Pg. 37
Section G: Developmental Areas for Year 2017-2018	Pg. 40

Section A: Statement of Guidance Policy

School Philosophy and Mission Statement

St. Aidan's C.B.S. promotes the Edmund Rice Charter through nurturing *faith*, promoting *partnership*, excelling in *teaching*, creating *community* and inspiring *leadership*.

In achieving this all staff of St. Aidan's CBS seek to enable each and every student to develop his full potential. The Guidance Counsellor plays an important part in the areas of counselling and guidance, as well as involvement in the Pastoral Care system.

What is Guidance in schools?

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

- **Personal and social**
- **Educational**
- **Career**

Guidance activities that assist students to make informed choices include:

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

Counselling is a key part of the school guidance programme, offered on an individual or group basis as part of a developmental learning process and at moments of personal crisis. Counselling may include personal counselling, educational counselling, career counselling, or combinations of these.

The Aims of the Guidance Counselling Service

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

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

Guidance

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

- 1. Personal and Social**
- 2. Educational**
- 3. Career**

1. Personal and Social

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

2. Educational

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

3. Career

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

Counselling

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

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

Objectives:

- To develop awareness and acceptance of their talents and abilities
- To identify and explore opportunities
- To grow in independence and take responsibility for themselves
- To make informed choices about their lives and follow through on these choices.

Ethical Considerations and Accountability

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

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

Section B: Guidance Programme

Current Guidance Programme

The Guidance curriculum may be divided into two components:

- Formal
- Informal

Formal Guidance

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

1. Individual contact of a personal, counselling nature and careers Guidance.
2. Classroom Guidance delivered in regular weekly classes to senior cycle students.

Informal Guidance

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

Junior Cycle

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

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

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

Wellbeing - September 2017

St. Aidan's CBS is ready to take on this important programme and recognises that student wellbeing is something that needs a whole-school approach. The required 300 hours per year from September 2017 will be met.

Provision for First Year students

- **Annual Open Night:** This allows potential students the opportunity to look around and experience the atmosphere of the school. Teachers and students are available to answer questions and give information regarding subjects and supports.
- Incoming First Years sit an **entrance test** in January/February. This is a useful indicator of a student's ability and identifies high achievers as well as those who may require additional support.
- The Special Educational Needs (SEN) coordinator **visits all the feeder primary schools** for an information-sharing session to help with the transition to secondary school.
- **Incoming First Years with SEN**, or those who are particularly anxious, take part in a meet and greet welcome morning in May. This helps to ease the transition from primary school.
- An **Information Evening** for parents of incoming first year students takes place in April/May. Parents are given practical information about the running of the school and how to prepare for secondary school.
- **First Year Induction** occurs on the first day of term. Students meet with Year Head in the morning and take a tour of the school in small groups. Then they meet their class tutor. Lockers are allocated, journals are distributed and the school Code of Conduct is explained. The students' council members organise games and ice-breaker activities.
- Students take part in **two-week option subject taster courses** to try all subject options in first year. This allows them to make informed choices regarding their subject choices for Junior Certificate. After ten weeks of taster courses, they then choose their option.
- All classes have one class period of **Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) / Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)** per week.
- All classes have a double period of **Physical Education (PE)** per week.
- All classes have one class period of **Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE)** per week.
- Students are encouraged to become active members of the school community through the extensive range of **extracurricular activities**.
- **Parent teacher meetings** for first year students are scheduled.

- **Learning or emotional issues** which arise are dealt with through the School Pastoral Care System; which includes tutors, year heads, the Care Team, the Guidance Counsellor and the SEN Department.
- A group of sixth year students act as **student mentors** to each first year tutor class. They support students who are finding it difficult to settle in. They meet with the classes on a weekly basis and offer help and advice.
- The **Year Head liaises** with parents, subject teachers, class tutors and the Guidance Counsellor to address any issues of concern.
- Students can avail of **counselling** with the Guidance Counsellor by referral from a teacher, parent or by self-referral.
- **Individual meetings** are held between students and the Guidance Counsellor, or parents and the Guidance Counsellor on request. These can be in relation to personal, educational or career matters.
- Students can also avail of a **counselling with a psychotherapist** who is on the staff or an outside psychotherapist who comes into the school on a Friday. This is usually arranged through the Guidance Counsellor.
- **Referrals** to outside agencies are made when the school resources and expertise are exhausted in dealing with particular issues.
- **Social Skills Programme - Get Up! Stand Up! This was developed by the National Educational Psychological Society (NEPS).** It run once or twice per year for those students who are deemed to benefit from it. Suggestions of suitable candidates are sought from Year Heads and class tutors.
- **Junior Achievement** provide volunteers to run programmes in the areas of Maths and Science.
- **An Garda Síochána** are invited in to speak to students about personal safety and cyber bullying.
- **Drama groups** are invited in to dramatise topics that may be of benefit to students.
- **Assemblies** are conducted every month to reinforce positive behaviour, to reflect on our school ethos, to provide positive feedback to year groups and highlight all the activities

which take place for that year group.

- **Anti-bullying surveys** are conducted both to prevent and investigate bullying occurrences.
- **Mental Health Week** involves activities organised and speakers invited in to promote mental health awareness and wellbeing.
- **International Day** is an opportunity to give recognition to the 46 different nationalities that are represented in St. Aidan's CBS. This is a chance to show that we are an Edmund Rice school which values inclusion and diversity and welcomes all students equally.
- As a link school for DCU, their **Outreach Programme** invites students to take part in many activities to promote college awareness at Junior Cycle and to build links with DCU. These include Discover DCU, Summer Scholars, Tag Rugby, Maths Fun Days and Soccer Blitz.
- A school **trip** may be organised at the end of the year.
- **Active Schools Week** takes place in May whereby activities are organised for first to fifth year students and the sixth year students versus staff football match also takes place. On Friday of that week, all first to fifth year students and all staff go to Santry Stadium for the **Sports Day**.

Provision for Second Year

- Second year students are encouraged to become **autonomous members** of the school community.
- Students are encouraged to become active members of the school community through the extensive range of **extracurricular activities**.
- All classes have one period of **SPHE/RSE** per week.
- All classes have a double period of **PE** per week.
- All classes have one class period of **CSPE** per week.
- **Learning or emotional issues** which arise are dealt with through the School Pastoral Care System; which includes tutors, year heads, the Care Team, the Guidance Counsellor and the SEN Department.
- **Parent teacher meetings** for second year students are scheduled.
- Year Head **liaises** with parents, subject teachers, class tutors and the guidance counsellor to address any issues of concern.
- Students can avail of **counselling** with the Guidance Counsellor by referral from a teacher, parent or by self-referral.
- **Individual meetings** are held between students and the Guidance counsellor and parents and the Guidance Counsellor on request. These can be in relation to personal, educational or career matters.
- Students can also avail of **counselling with a psychotherapist** who is on the staff or an outside psychotherapist who comes into the school on a Friday. This is usually arranged through the Guidance Counsellor.
- **Referrals** to outside agencies are made when the school resources and expertise are exhausted in dealing with particular issues.
- **Junior Achievement** provide volunteers to run programmes in the areas of Maths & Science.

- **Assemblies** are conducted every month to reinforce positive behaviour, to reflect on our school ethos, to provide positive feedback to year groups and highlight all the activities which take place for that year group.
- **Students' Council** includes second year students who take part in many aspects of school life and represent the views of the students, as well as organise school events.
- **Anti-bullying surveys** are conducted both to prevent and investigate bullying occurrences.
- **Mental Health Week** involves activities organised and speakers invited in to promote mental health awareness and wellbeing.
- **International Day** is an opportunity to give recognition to the 46 different nationalities that are represented in St. Aidan's CBS. This is a chance to show that we are an Edmund Rice school which values inclusion and diversity and welcomes all students equally.
- As a link school for DCU, their **Outreach Programme** invites students to take part in many activities to promote college awareness at Junior Cycle and to build links with DCU. These include Discover DCU, Summer Scholars, Tag Rugby, Maths Fun Days and Soccer Blitz.
- A school **trip** may be organised at the end of the year.
- **Active Schools Week** takes place in May whereby activities are organised for first to fifth year students and the sixth year students versus staff football match also takes place. On Friday of that week, all first to fifth year students and all staff go to Santry Stadium for the **Sports Day**.

Provision for Third Year students

- Students are encouraged to remain **active members** of the school community.
- A strong emphasis is put on academic achievement and on reaching one's **potential**.
- Students are encouraged to become active members of the school community through the extensive range of **extracurricular activities**.
- The Principal and Deputy Principal **meet with parents** in October to clearly outline expectations and give practical information for the year. For example deadlines for the presentation of practical work for examination purposes.
- **Study skills workshops** are provided for all students.
- All classes have one period of **SPHE/RSE** per week.
- All classes have a double period of **PE** per week.
- All classes have one class period of **CSPE** per week.
- **Parent teacher meetings** for third year students are scheduled.
- **Learning or emotional issues** which arise are dealt with through the School Pastoral Care System; which includes tutors, year heads, the Care Team, the Guidance Counsellor and the SEN Department.
- The **Year Head liaises** with parents, subject teachers, class tutors and the Guidance Counsellor to address any issues of concern.
- Students can avail of **counselling** with the Guidance Counsellor by referral from a teacher, parent or by self-referral.
- **Individual meetings** are held between students and the guidance counsellor and parents and the guidance counsellor on request. These can be in relation to personal, educational or career matters.
- Students can also avail of a **counselling with a psychotherapist** who is on the staff or an outside psychotherapist who comes into the school on a Friday. This is usually arranged

through the Guidance Counsellor.

- **Referrals** to outside agencies are made and when the school resources and expertise are exhausted in dealing with particular issues.
- A third year **retreat** is held annually.
- Smart Futures give talks on **STEM** (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) subjects when available.
- Junior Cert Examination **Special Accommodations** are processed by the SEN Department.
- Third year students are introduced to the **Senior Cycle programme** and **Subject options**. These include Transition Year (TY), the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) and the Leaving Certificate Applied programme (LCA), if it is to be offered the following year. A **full day seminar** with presentations from subject teachers is provided to the year group. Subject teachers provide information on their subject.
- Where necessary, up to **two class periods** per class group are provided with the **Guidance Counsellor** to discuss the various options and to answer questions. Follow up appointments may be made at this point.
- An **Evening presentation** is provided for parents. A programme and subject descriptor booklet is given to all parents who attend.
- Students have a **choice** either to go into fifth year or to apply to Transition Year. The majority of third year students go into Transition Year. This process is decided by an application and interview process.
- **Assemblies** are conducted every month to reinforce positive behaviour, to reflect on our school ethos, to provide positive feedback to year groups and highlight all the activities which take place for that year group.
- **Students' Council** includes third years who take part in many aspects of school life and represent the views of the students, as well as organise school events.
- **Anti-bullying surveys** are conducted both to prevent and investigate bullying occurrences.
- **Mental Health Week** involves activities organised and speakers invited in to promote mental health awareness and wellbeing.

- **International Day** is an opportunity to give recognition to the 46 different nationalities that are represented in St. Aidan's CBS. This is a chance to show that we are an Edmund Rice school which values inclusion and diversity and welcomes all students equally.
- As a **link school for DCU**, their **Outreach Programme** invites students to take part in many activities to promote college awareness at Junior Cycle and to build links with DCU. These include Discover DCU, Achievement Awards for 3rd years, Summer Scholars, Tag Rugby, Maths Fun Days and Soccer Blitz.
- A school **trip** may be organised at the end of the year.
- **Active Schools Week** takes place in May whereby activities are organised for first to fifth year students and the sixth year students versus staff football match also takes place. On Friday of that week, all first to fifth year students and all staff go to Santry Stadium for the **Sports Day**.

Senior Cycle

The aims of the Guidance Counselling programme are:

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

Objectives:

Guidance Counselling 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 the successful transition into adulthood.
- Learn about jobs search and job retention skills.
- Develop research and Information Technology skills so that they can be self-directed in their career exploration and development.
- Learn about the world of work, including employment rights and responsibilities.
- Develop skills to become independent and self-motivated learners.

Provision for Transition Year students

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

- T. Y. induction day
- Bonding trip to Connemara
- Class tutor/Year Head
- Work experience
- Folder of excellence, certificates of merit, distinction and participation
- Report at the end of year
- Credit system
- Graduation and exhibition of work
- Leaving Certificate subject information day
- Subject tasters in class
- Spectrum Personality/Behaviour Assessment
- SPHE - health and wellbeing, work safety, personal choices
- Work Experience
- Practical Achievement Task
- CV/cover letters
- DCU Access
- Accenture interview skills
- Business - enterprise and mini company
- Student Enterprise Awards
- European Computer Driving Licence course (ECDL)
- Retreat in Emmaus centre
- History tour and many educational visits
- Friday morning placements in both local primary schools and DCU
- Build a bank, Young Social Innovator (YSI) and Gaisce
- Numerous guest speakers on topics deemed suited to the group, e.g. Accord, Aware, AA, The Samaritans

As with other year groups:

- All classes have a triple period of **PE** per week.
- **Assemblies** are conducted every month to reinforce positive behaviour, to reflect on our school ethos, to provide positive feedback to year groups and highlight all the activities

which take place for that year group.

- **Students' Council** includes Transition Year students who take part in many aspects of school life and represent the views of the students, as well as organise school events.
- **Parent teacher meetings** for third year students are scheduled.
- **Learning or emotional issues** which arise are dealt with through the School Pastoral Care System; which includes tutors, year heads, the Care Team, the Guidance Counsellor and the SEN Department.
- The **Year Head liaises** with parents, subject teachers, form teachers and the guidance counsellor to address any issues of concern.
- **Individual meetings** are held between students and the Guidance Counsellor and parents and the Guidance Counsellor on request. These can be in relation to personal, educational or career matters.
- An **Evening presentation** is provided for parents. A programme and subject descriptor booklet is given to all parents who attend.
- Where necessary, up to **two class periods** per class group are provided with the **Guidance Counsellor** to discuss the various options and to answer questions. Follow up appointments may be made at this point.
- Students can avail of **counselling** with the Guidance Counsellor by referral from a teacher, parent or by self-referral.
- Students can also avail of a **counselling with a psychotherapist** who is on the staff or an outside psychotherapist who comes into the school on a Friday. This is usually arranged through the Guidance Counsellor.
- **Referrals** to outside agencies are made and when the school resources and expertise are exhausted in dealing with particular issues.
- **Anti-bullying surveys** are conducted both to prevent and investigate bullying occurrences.
- **Mental Health Week** involves activities organised and speakers invited in to promote mental health awareness and wellbeing.
- **International Day** is an opportunity to give recognition to the 46 different nationalities

that are represented in St. Aidan's CBS. This is a chance to show that we are an Edmund Rice school which values inclusion and diversity and welcomes all students equally.

- **Active Schools Week** takes place in May whereby activities are organised for first to fifth year students and the sixth year students versus staff football match also takes place. On Friday of that week, all first to fifth year students and all staff go to Santry Stadium for the **Sports Day**.
- As a **link school for DCU**, all students take part in their **UniTY programme** which has been designed to increase student engagement in education and to raise motivation and career aspirations. In St. Aidan's CBS this involves lessons for students on Multimedia and Student Empowerment.

Provision for Fifth Year students

- In fifth year, students have a choice of traditional **Leaving Certificate**, or **LCA** every second year, or traditional **Leaving Cert with LCVP**. The majority choose traditional Leaving Certificate. A small number choose LCA.
- There is one double class of **LCVP** in fifth year.
- **LCVP** students have one week's **work experience**.
- **LCA** students have one day per week **work experience**.
- All classes have one period of **SPHE/RSE** per week.
- All classes have a double period of **PE/Study/LCVP** per week.
- **Parent teacher meetings** for fifth year students are scheduled.
- **Learning or emotional issues** which arise are dealt with through the School Pastoral Care System; which includes tutors, year heads, the Care Team, the Guidance Counsellor and the SEN Department.
- The **Year Head liaises** with parents, subject teachers, form teachers and the Guidance Counsellor to address any issues of concern.
- **Individual meetings** are held between students and the guidance counsellor and parents and the guidance counsellor on request. These can be in relation to personal, educational or career matters.
- Students can avail of **counselling** with the Guidance Counsellor by referral from a teacher, parent or by self-referral.
- Students can also avail of a **counselling with a psychotherapist** who is on the staff or an outside psychotherapist who comes into the school on a Friday. This is usually arranged through the Guidance Counsellor.
- **Referrals** to outside agencies are made when the school resources and expertise are exhausted in dealing with particular issues.
- **Guest speakers** from voluntary organisations, local enterprises, financial institutions and colleges address individual classes or year group.

- **Study skills workshops** are provided for all students.
- **Assemblies** are conducted every month to reinforce positive behaviour, to reflect on our school ethos, to provide positive feedback to year groups and highlight all the activities which take place for that year group.
- **Students Council** includes fifth years who take part in many aspects of school life and represent the views of the students, as well as organise school events.
- **Anti-bullying surveys** are conducted if deemed necessary to prevent and investigate bullying occurrences.
- **Mental Health Week** involves activities organised and speakers invited in to promote mental health awareness and wellbeing.
- **International Day** is an opportunity to give recognition to the 46 different nationalities that are represented in St. Aidan's CBS. This is a chance to show that we are an Edmund Rice school which values inclusion and diversity and welcomes all students equally.
- As a link school for DCU, their **Outreach Programme** invites students to take part in **UFirst**, a programme designed for students who are part of groups underrepresented in third level. This programme helps students to be 'college-ready'. It involves going to DCU once per month all through senior cycle.

Provision for Sixth Year students

- There is a strong emphasis on each student achieving their potential.
- There is one double class of **LCVP** in sixth year.
- **LCA** students have one day per week **work experience**.
- All classes have a double period of **PE/Study/LCVP** per week.
- All classes have one period of **Guidance** per week.
- The **Year Head liaises** with parents, subject teachers, form teachers and the guidance counsellor to address any issues of concern.
- **Learning or emotional issues** which arise are dealt with through the School Pastoral Care System; which includes tutors, year heads, the Care Team, the Guidance Counsellor and the SEN Department.
- **Two Parent teacher meetings** for sixth year students are scheduled. Students accompany their parents to these meetings.
- Year Head **liaises** with parents, subject teachers, form teachers and the guidance counsellor to address any issues of concern.
- **Individual meetings** are held between students and the guidance counsellor and parents and the guidance counsellor on request. These can be in relation to personal, educational or career matters.
- Students can avail of **counselling** with the Guidance Counsellor by referral from a teacher, parent or by self-referral.
- Students can also avail of a **counselling with a psychotherapist** who is on the staff or an outside psychotherapist who comes into the school on a Friday. This is usually arranged through the Guidance Counsellor.
- **Referrals** to outside agencies are made when the school resources and expertise are exhausted in dealing with particular issues.
- **Assemblies** are conducted every month to reinforce positive behaviour, to reflect on our school ethos, to provide positive feedback to year groups and highlight all the activities

which take place for that year group.

- A group of sixth year students act as **student mentors** to each first year tutor class. They support students who are finding it difficult to settle in. They meet with the classes on a weekly basis and offer help and advice.
- **Students' Council** includes sixth years who take part in many aspects of school life and represent the views of the students, as well as organise school events.
- **Anti-bullying surveys** are conducted if deemed necessary to both prevent and investigate bullying occurrences.
- **Mental Health Week** involves activities organised and speakers invited in to promote mental health awareness and wellbeing.
- **International Day** is an opportunity to give recognition to the 46 different nationalities that are represented in St. Aidan's CBS. This is a chance to show that we are an Edmund Rice school which values inclusion and diversity and welcomes all students equally.
- All sixth Year students attend the **Higher Options Exhibition**.
- Sixth Year LCA students visit a **College of Further Education**.
- Students have **one-to-one career planning meetings** with the Guidance Counsellor. Appointments are distributed during class. It is the aim of the Guidance service to ensure that each sixth year student receives a minimum of one guidance appointment with the Guidance Counsellor. If a student requires more time, another appointment can be organised by arrangement with the Guidance Counsellor.
- **Visiting speakers** are invited in throughout the year. These are generally from **Higher Education Institutes (HEI) or Colleges of Further Education (CFE)**. They may be general information talks on the specific HEI or they may be subject specific, depending on the needs of the year group.
- Students are encouraged to attend **Open Days** on Saturdays to ensure students do not miss class time. A schedule of Open Days is displayed in the staff room.
- A Google **Calendar of events** for 6th years, including all important deadlines, Open Days and speakers, is shared with staff and students. It is updated as events are added throughout the year.

- **Important dates and deadlines** are announced over the intercom.
- **Reminder texts** are sent to parents.
- A sixth Year **Retreat** is held annually.
- As a link school for DCU, their **Outreach Programme** invites students to take part in **UFirst**, a programme designed for students who are part of groups underrepresented in third level. This programme helps students to be 'college-ready'. It involves going to DCU once per month all through senior cycle.
- On the last day of school sixth Years are invited to an **end-of-year Mass** followed by **lunch with the staff**.
- A **Graduation Ceremony** is conducted in which the whole school community shares.

Section C: Current Guidance Procedures

Subject Choice Procedure

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

Junior Cycle

1. Sixth Class to First Year.
2. Early in First Year, having had two-week tasters of optional subjects.

Optional Subjects	Core Subjects
Woodwork	English
Technical Graphics	Irish
Music	Maths
Art	History
Technology	Geography
	Business Studies
	Religion
	Science
	French
	CSPE
	Physical Education
	SPHE

Students are asked to choose one optional subject to continue studying up to the Junior Certificate

3. Third year students have a decision to make in four areas:
 - A. Whether to do Higher or Ordinary level at Junior Certificate.
 - B. Whether to apply to do Transition Year or continue into Fifth Year.
 - C. Whether to enter the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme, if on offer the following academic year.

Senior Cycle

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

Students have to choose the subjects they wish to study in Fifth Year.

Optional Subjects	Core Subjects
French History Geography Biology Chemistry Physics Business Economics Accounting Art Music Technology Construction Studies Religion Design and Communication Graphics	Irish English Maths

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

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

Counselling and Student Appointment Procedures

General

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

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

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

Careers Appointment

Career Interviews will typically include the following:

- Analysis of Career Guidance Record sheet completed by student,
- Analysis of Careers Portal inventory,

- Career values,
- Options Available,
- Based on this analysis, a college / career path is developed with each student.

Priority for appointments is given to sixth Year students. Appointments for other years are given as soon as is practicable.

Arrangement of Appointments

Career appointments are given in Guidance class. They usually begin the first Monday following Higher Options, depending on the size of the year group. They receive an appointment slip to give to their subject teacher they have at that time. It is up to the individual teachers to give permission to the students to attend the meeting. Students may make a follow up appointment at the end of this initial appointment.

Information Appointment

These are arranged outside of class time with the Guidance Counsellor. Students are given an appointment slip to give to their subject teacher they have at that time. It is up to the individual teachers to give permission to the students to attend the meeting. Students may make a follow up appointment at the end of this initial appointment.

Personal Counselling Appointments

The Care Team members, Year Heads and Class Teachers 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 member of staff may ask the Guidance Counsellor to meet with a student,
- A referral may be made through the Care Team.

Counselling has as its objective the empowerment of students so that they can make decisions, solve problems, address behavioural issues, develop coping strategies and resolve difficulties they may be experiencing.

Possible reasons for appointments may include:

- Personal problems,
- Family problems,
- Relationship problems,
- Coping skills,

- Motivation ,
- Making choices,
- Transition to third level education and the adult world.

Personal Counselling Procedures

Personal counselling appointments will be arranged as soon as possible. Permission of the class teacher will be sought through an appointment slip where possible. However at times it may be necessary for the Guidance Counsellor to seek out a student for an appointment. The class teacher will always be asked for permission to excuse the student first.

Central Applications Office (CAO) Appointments

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

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

- shown how the application process works and a demonstration run is completed with the students.
- given an allotted time whereby they can make their application using the school's computers.
- offered CAO application appointments with the Guidance Counsellor and each student is given a written notice of their appointment.

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

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

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

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

Sixth Year Tracking of students

Every year the school secretary follows up on where our students progress to.

Guidance Counsellor Year Calendar

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

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

Typical events include:

- CAO Conference,
- Higher Options,
- Guidance Counsellor's Conference,
- Other Relevant Guidance Counsellor's In-service,
- Open Days,
- Application Dates for CAO and UCAS,
- Various career events which may be of interest to students or staff.

Confidentiality

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

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

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

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

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

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

Assessment Procedures

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

Assessment of Incoming First Year Students

Currently the assessment test is administered by the Principal or guidance counsellor as part of the entrance procedure that incoming First year students are asked to take. The test administered is the Cognitive Ability Test (CAT 4).

This test gives the school an indication of the strengths of incoming students in the areas of verbal and numerical reasoning.

The Special Educational Needs coordinator contacts feeder primary schools in order to identify the particular needs of students. The Special Needs coordinator will meet with all the relevant parties and process applications for the resources required.

Assessment during Transition Year

In October of Transition Year, students are tested using **Spectrum Assessments**. This is used to help the gathering and processing of information about themselves, in order to help them make decisions based on a good self-understanding of their behaviours and motivators.

It also helps assess those attributes in the search for a successful and fulfilling career.

Assessment during Sixth Year

Leaving Certificate students use the Careers Portal website which has vast resources in relation to pursuing college courses and future careers.

As students have access to computers in every Guidance class these tests are carried out online. Students are encouraged to create an online account to save all their findings to use for future research. These tests include:

- Interest-based tests to see what level of interest a student would have in a particular career or course.
- Personality tests which allow the students to gain more self-knowledge.
- Career Values questionnaires in order for students to work what is important to them

in relation to their future.

Guest 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 which are 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. Talks may be held on certain subject areas depending on the demand in a given year.

Notice of guest speakers is emailed to staff. A list of students who attended will be emailed.

Records

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

Records are kept in two forms:

- Electronically, or
- Hard copy.

All personal contact details are accessed on the school's E-portal system.

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

- Spectrum results,
- Inventories results,
- Career inventory,
- Values worksheet.

Also each individual visit is recorded and kept on file.

This includes, for all sixth year students, the following information:

- Name
- Age
- Siblings
- Career interests
- Colleges which students wish to apply for
- These files are kept for seven years after the student has left the school.

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

Open Days - Sixth Year Students

As part of the Careers programme in the school sixth year students are encouraged to attend The Irish Times Higher Options Conference and 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 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.

Procedure for Organising Open Days Sixth Year Students

The Guidance Counsellor in collaboration with the Principal and the 6th Year Head shall advise what Open Days are due in the coming year.

The number of Open Days is generally limited to two per student, as well as attendance at the DCU Open Day each year, accompanied by the Guidance Counsellor. Where practicable visits to College Open Days will occur in the afternoon or on Saturday in order to minimise the class time missed by students.

A list of selected open days is given to the students. This may include Universities, Institutes of Technology and Colleges of Further Education. Students select from the list which colleges they wish to attend and get written permission from their parents to attend. However all Open day information is accessible to all students on the individual College/University website.

This signed open days form is given to the tutor as a record of events students will attend and therefore be absent from school for.

Information regarding Open Days

Lists of open days are displayed on the school notice board. They are also available through the CAO website , Qualifax or individual college websites.

The Value of Open Days and making the most of them

Open days are very important in the process of career exploration and planning. Visiting a college for an open day should be regarded by the student as a worthwhile exercise which requires planning and effort on the day.

It should be a good learning experience enabling the student to look behind the title of the

courses. The focus should be on understanding what courses are about and what potential career they may lead to. Students may think they know what is involved in subjects that are familiar, such as English or Geography; but these are often very different at third level. Therefore they should discover the differences when visiting the college.

Planning for the open day

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

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

Students dropping a subject/changing subject level

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

Pastoral Care Team meetings

Regular meetings of the Pastoral Care team are organised between the Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellor, SEN team member, Year Heads, Tutors and other members as deemed appropriate. The aim is to conduct these meetings every week if possible, but regularity and attendance will vary depending on the circumstances and availability of individuals. Each meeting has an agenda and minutes are kept.

Study Skills Programme

The school management, in consultation with Year heads may arrange a study skills programme, delivered by an outside agency, for students in third, fifth or sixth year.

A study skills programme will be delivered to junior students through the SPHE programme.

A study skills programme will be delivered to the senior students in their Guidance class.

Section D: Current Policies related to Guidance

Policy Name

Special Educational Needs Policy

Internet Usage Policy

RSE Policy

Anti-Bullying Policy

Code of Behaviour Policy

Child Protection Policy

The Guidance Plan should be read in conjunction with these policies.

These policies are held by the school management and are available through the school management.

Section E: Guidance Resources

Guidance Counsellor's office

Phone

Computer networked to the main school network

Printer

Broadband available in office

Filing cabinet

Notice boards

Use of computer rooms for class and resources

Information relating to outside agencies

Workbooks related to working with students

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

Section F: The Role of the Guidance Counsellor

Name of Guidance Counsellor

Karen McGrath

Qualifications

B.A (Hon)., H.DipEd., PGD. SGC(Hons)

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

Counselling

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

Counselling is a key part of the school guidance programme, offered on an individual or group basis as part of a developmental learning process and at moments of personal crisis.

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

The rationale for the time allocated and its usage is evident in the school guidance plan.

See the Department of Education and Skills

Guidelines for Second Level Schools on the implications of Section9(c) of the Education Act(1998), relating to students' access to appropriate guidance.

Support

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

Assessment

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

Information

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

Classroom Guidance Activities

Providing classroom-based learning experiences that are relevant to the objectives of the

school guidance programme. Such experiences may include information giving, information and communication technologies(ICT), developmental skills (e.g. planning, decision-making, study skills, communication, values clarification), and career preparation.

Referrals

Seeking for students the assistance of non-school based professionals following standard procedures, e.g. NEPS.

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

Professional Development

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

Attendance at non-school based events should be negotiated / agreed in advance between the Board of Management, school management and the guidance counsellor.

Careers education / career transition programmes

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

The World of Work

Preparing students for employment.

Consultation

With parents, school staff and students.

Feedback

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

Networking

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

Promoting change

Assisting curriculum development in the school.

Managing, Organising and Coordinating

It is the Guidance Counsellor's role to organise the guidance activities into a coherent programme in conjunction with the management and staff of the school.

The nature and range of guidance activities as outlined above are based on the premise that guidance is both a whole school concern and a specialist area within education.

Communication, involvement and dissemination

This policy was written by the Guidance Counsellor. The formation of this policy was done by engaging in a process of collaboration involving the principal, deputy principals, the policy development co-ordinator, the teaching staff, and the care team.

Evaluation

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

Specifically important to our Guidance plan is:

- Pupil feedback
- Staff feedback
- Parental feedback

This plan will be shared with the full teaching staff, students and Parents' Council in September/October 2017.

Ratification

It is the view that this policy will be ratified by the Board of Management on 28th November 2017.

Review and Development

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

Section G: Developmental Areas for Year 2017-2018

OVERVIEW OF ACTION PLAN FOR GUIDANCE

Priorities	Task	Target
To set up a Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)	Management will look for potential suitable members of CIMT	September 2017
Induction for First years	Look at programmes to ease transition from primary to secondary school, e.g. Breathe in, Breathe out programme (BIBO)	In place at end of school year, for implementation September 2018