

Coláiste Fionnchua *Mitchelstown*



Guidance Policy

Guidance Counsellor's Department Plan
Academic Year 19/20
Coláiste Fionnchua

1. General Information

SCOPE OF THE CODE:

The policy is for students, parents/guardians, teachers and management of Coláiste Fionnchua, Mitchelstown, Co. Cork. This policy should be read in conjunction with the School's Admission Policy, AEN Policy, Wellbeing Policy and The Code of Behaviour.

RELATIONSHIP TO SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT:

Mission Statement

'A caring learning community'

We provide an inclusive and respectful learning environment where students entrusted into our care can develop and reach their full academic and individual potential.

The school guidance plan is a structured document that describes the school guidance programme and specifies how the guidance needs of students are to be addressed. It includes reference to personal counselling, an integral component of the work of the Guidance Counsellor. This plan forms part of the Whole School Guidance plan.

Rationale

Section 9(c) of the Education Act (1998) requires schools to "...ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their career choices...."
The provision of guidance is a statutory requirement for schools under this Act.

Circular 09/2012 goes on to state that...(the need for schools) to ensure that the Guidance Counsellor has one to one time towards meeting the counselling needs of the students facing emotional difficulties or crisis (Section 4.3)

Implications

The Act refers to access (to school resources, physical and personnel...) and appropriate guidance (i.e. whole school response to meeting the guidance needs of all its students).

Guidance is a core requirement of the school's overall programme: this requires that it is an integral part of the school plan. The mission statement and the school ethos are reflected in the guidance plan.

What is guidance in schools?

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

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

Guidance activities that assist students make informed choices include:

- *Personal counselling*
- *Assessment using psychometric instruments and inventories*
- *Career information (classroom, personal vocational guidance 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.

Aims

- *Provide a framework for the delivery of the school's guidance programme*
- *Ensures a structured response to student's personal, social, educational and career guidance needs*
- *The plan needs to provide for the junior, senior, minority, special education needs etc., of all students / adult learners.*
- *The plan will include all guidance activities: classroom sessions, Vocational Guidance Interviews, attendance at career exhibitions, open days etc., meeting with management, support agencies etc., personal counselling etc.*

Objectives

- *Develop awareness and acceptance of their talents and abilities*
- *Identify and explore opportunities*
- *Grow in independence and take responsibility for themselves*
- *Make informed choices about their lives and follow through on these choices*
- *That all students will be aware of the availability of the Guidance Counsellor to them individually*
- *That all students will have a firm knowledge of the role of the Guidance Counsellor*
- *That all students will be familiar with the boundaries of confidentiality*
- *That an awareness of Multiple Intelligences be developed*

Planning for students with additional needs

- *Individual time given*
- *Liaison with Additional Educational Needs Co-ordinator*
- *Links with the National Learning Framework*
- *Links with Third Level institutions*
- *Links with outside support agencies*

Guidance Counsellor

Ms. Catherine Canavan-Hickey.

Subject Coordinator

Ms. Catherine Canavan-Hickey.

Role of Subject Coordinator

The delivery of a comprehensive Guidance Programme is the responsibility of the Guidance Counsellor but a whole school approach is essential to realise this objective. A holistic approach to Guidance provision is essential to ensure all students have “access to appropriate Guidance” (9 (C) Education Act.1998). Guidance planning is to be considered a process, to evolve over time, reflecting the needs of all students, available resources and contextual factors.

Time Allocation, option Structures and Timetabling

In the current academic year the Guidance Counsellor has thirteen timetabled 40 minute slots (class periods), 8hours 40 minutes, where she is available to meet students on a one-to-one basis. (She uses some of her own free class periods to meet with students one-to-one also.)

*The L.C.A. Guidance Module is delivered in class to Yr. 1 and Yr. 2 L.C.A. students by the Guidance Counsellor, through the teaching of Vocational Preparation and Guidance (VPG), two classes per week *(See Appendix 1)*

Transition Year careers class is delivered by the Guidance Counsellor, one class per week. Leaving Certificate careers is delivered by the Guidance Counsellor during one of their LCVP classes, every second week (where the class is split to facilitate smaller group work) or every week.

The Guidance Counsellor teaches Guidance to all first years, in three separate class groups in this current academic year, where the ‘Belonging Plus’ Programme is delivered.

The Guidance Counsellor, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, Behaviour for Learning teacher, Home School Community Liaison, School Completion Officer, Deputy Principal and Principal meet weekly, for forty minutes, to discuss the pastoral care needs of the students, notes are submitted by the Pastoral Care Team members, above, on the Pastoral Care ‘one drive’ in advance of these meetings.

The Guidance Counsellor co-ordinates the UCC+ Plus Programme, the CIT Schools Programme as part of the Access Service and the ‘Skills at Work Programme’, in conjunction with Business in the Community.

The Guidance Counsellor assists the students with their applications to Further Education, CAO, UCAS, EUNICAS, for scholarships and with their HEAR and DARE applications. The Guidance Counsellor, along with the Special Needs Co-ordinator complete the school section, Section B (Educational Impact Statement) of the DARE forms.

2 Guidance Curriculum

The Guidance curriculum may be divided into two components:

- *Formal*
- *Informal.*

Formal Guidance

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

1. *Individual contact of a personal counselling nature and careers/vocational guidance.*
2. *Classroom guidance delivered in class or year group intervention as required.*

Informal Guidance

The Informal Guidance programme consists of liaising with other Teaching Staff/Management to promote cross curricular links and to enhance the development of a whole school policy in relation to the delivery of The Guidance Plan. Meetings with Parents/Guardians form an integral part of Informal guidance.

Effective Teaching Methodologies

- *Whole class teaching*
- *Group assignments*
- *Videos / TV*
- *One-to-one*
- *Individual assignments*
- *Role play*
- *Students undertaking research*
- *Self-assessment*
- *Decision-making, problem-solving*
- *Practical activities*
- *Field trips/ Careers Options/ Open Days*
- *Using computers/ IPADS*
- *Outside speakers*
- *Project work*

Range and Variety of Resources

- *Personnel*
- *Materials*
- *Facilities*
- *External*

Personnel

Guidance Counsellor, Management, BOM, Year Heads, Subject Teachers, Special Needs Assistants, School Completion Officer, School Completion Project Worker, Class Teachers, School Secretary, Canteen staff and Caretaker.

Materials

The careers library contains current Irish and UK prospectuses as well as a range of careers related publications. All books may be borrowed through the main school library.

Textbooks

*"Career Choice – Your Essential Guide to Third Level Courses in Ireland".
"Student Yearbook & Career Diary".*

ICTs

Use of internet:

Qualifax www.qualifax.ie

Career directions www.careerdirections.ie

Careers Portal www.careersportal.ie

Availability/use of ICT Facilities:

All teaching staff has their own Ipad along with all first year students, since the beginning of the academic year 2018/2019.

Internet access in classroom, class taken in Computer Room to provide teacher and student access to the internet.

Facilities

Guidance Office, Careers Library, Computer Room, Notice boards/ Careers Notice Board in main Corridor.

External

Open days to Colleges of Further Education, I.T.'s and Universities, Career Exhibitions, Career information sessions,

Guest speakers, Presentations by personnel from 3rd level institutions / Past pupils /.

3. Provision for Health and Safety Requirements

This section of the plan may be subdivided

- *Administration*
- *Policies*

Administration

To ensure the safe and effective delivery of guidance programme an Appointments System for Personal counselling/Careers/Vocational Guidance Interviews operates.

*Management/teachers/special needs assistants may fill out a pastoral care referral form (available on staff room noticeboard). *(See Appendix 2).*

Students are also encouraged to make an appointment with the Guidance Counsellor themselves as are parents/guardians encouraged to do so. Guidance & Counselling times are posted clearly on the Careers Notice Board of the school and on entry to the Guidance Counsellors Office.

4. Programmes and Levels

Curriculum Content/Guidance Syllabus 1st – 6th year

Various presentations, workshops and careers related activities are organised by the Guidance Counsellor annually, in conjunction with 'College Awareness Week' (November), where students from 1st to 6th year are involved.

Year 1

Organisation

- *Timetabled with first years for Guidance class, once a week where the First Year Induction Programme 'Belonging Plus' is delivered*
- *All first years are met individually by the Guidance Counsellor between term 1 and 2 of the academic year (Sept. to Christmas)*
- *Students are met individually, if required, before making subject option choices after midterm (Nov.)*
- *Small group/Individual sessions by appointment.*

Syllabus

- *Coping with Change: Managing Stress*
- *New School, New Expectations, New Organisational Skills*
- *Finding My Way Around, Who's Who*
- *Improving Learning from Homework and Study*
- *Behaviour for Learning*
- *Making New Friends, Forming New Relationships*
- *Being Safe and Healthy in School*
- *New Subjects and Thinking Skills*

**All first years during their Guidance class also participate in Careers Interest Testing (as part of 'College Awareness Week' (end of Nov. each year) and complete a Careers Project*

**Mindfulness/ Self Care is an integral part of all first year Guidance classes*

External

- *Parent/Guardian information session on the transition of their child from primary school to Coláiste Fionnchua, held in May each year before the student commences in 1st year (Aug. /Sept.). In attendance; Principal, Deputy*

Principal, SEN Co-coordinator, Year Head, Class Tutors, School Completion Officer and Guidance Counsellor.

Year 2

Organisation

- *No formal class contact*
- *Individual sessions by appointment*
- *Students are met by the Guidance Counsellor if they are requesting a change in subject level*

Year 3

Organisation

- *No formal class contact...meet 4 times / year or by arrangement with individual teachers as required.*
- *Individual sessions by appointment*
 - *Students are met by the Guidance Counsellor if they are requesting a change in subject level*

Syllabus

- *Subject choice - L.C.A. / T.Y./L.C.V.P.*
- *Subject choice for students going directly to 5th year in line with requirements for the L.C.V.P. Programme.*

External

- *Study skills seminar – exam focus/revision planning/time management*
- *Students are encouraged to attend career talks / presentations / seminars / open days.....*

Year 4

Organisation

- *One class of Careers per week.*
- *Individual sessions by appointment*
- *Individual careers interviews, end of term 3 of TY, subject choice and preparation for transition to senior cycle (PL/ LCA)*

Syllabus

- *Career options*
- *Preparation for work placement*
- *Research skills...Use of internet*
- *Career planning/career investigation*
- *CAO – www.cao.ie*
- *UCAS – www.ucas.com*
- *EUNICAS -www.eunicas.ie*

- *Apprenticeships – www.solas.ie*
- *C.V. preparation*
- *Interview skills*

Year 5

Organisation

- *No Formal class contact*
- *Individual sessions by appointment*
- *Students are met by the Guidance Counsellor if they are requesting a change in subject choice and/or level*

External

- *Study skills seminar*
- *Students are encouraged to attend career talks / presentations / seminars / open days.....*

Year 6

Organisation

- *Formal class contact – use 1 class of LCVP per week, alternating small groups.*
- *Individual sessions by appointment*
- *Individual sessions at Guidance Counsellors request to carry out Vocational Guidance Interviews (VGI's) and to follow up on careers information, college applications etc.*
- *Students are met by the Guidance Counsellor if they are requesting a change in subject level*

Syllabus

An integral part of the programme is the involvement of guest speakers, attendance at career seminars, open days etc. The Guidance Programme is designed to meet of all students.

- *Study skills: Revision*
- *UCAS: Application Procedure (Sept) and EUNICAS*
- *Guest speakers e.g. UCC Plus+ Programme & HEAR Scheme*
- *CAO/ Career Planning: All students are met individually, (VGI –Vocational Guidance Interview) to prepare a career plan, to carry out career interest inventories if required and to prepare for their CAO application (Oct/Nov)*
- *CAO: Information night for parents and students November and Application Procedure (Nov/Dec)*
- *Individual CAO applications supervised and assistance given (Dec/Jan)*
- *Motivation: Review of results (Jan)*
- *Alternatives to Third Level: information & PLC options/QQI. (Feb)*

- *Interview Techniques, in preparation for PLC application interviews (links into Orals/April)*
- *Individual meetings with all students to review CAO when 'change of mind' facility opens (May)*
- *SUSI grant, Scholarships and transition from second level*

External

- *Study skills seminar*
- *Students are encouraged to attend career talks / presentations / seminars / open days.....*
- *Careers Options Exhibition*

Assessment Procedures / Evaluation

Assessment is not a feature of guidance. Informal 'assessment' in the clarification of career choice and subject choice, improved study skills and examination technique etc. provide some insight into the effectiveness of the Guidance Counsellor's interventions.

5. Record-keeping Procedures

Two types of records:

1. *Detailed Personal records of all Personal counselling and Careers/Vocational Guidance Interviews.*

**(See Appendix 3)*

2. *Summary reference records of Personal Counselling sessions *(See Appendix 4)*

- *Student records.*
- *The detailed records of personal counselling sessions should contain some of the actual words and phrases used by the client.*
- *To ensure accuracy the Guidance Counsellor should try to write up notes as soon as possible after the session.*
- *Keep notes as brief as possible.*

6. Reporting Procedures

In both Personal Counselling and in Careers/Vocational Guidance Interviews the confidentiality rule is followed i.e. school management, class teacher, year head and/or parents/guardians are informed if it is felt that the student is a danger to him/herself and/or to others or it is a legal requirement. The student is informed of the limits of confidentiality at the beginning of a session. If it is felt it is in the student's best interests to inform a Teacher/Parent/Guardian of a particular difficulty, on a 'need to know basis', this is only done with the knowledge and hopefully the agreement of the student.

7. In-Career Development

To maintain qualified membership of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors a chartered Member must complete 10 hours of in-service training annually (IGC Constitution and Code of Ethics 2004).

In-Career development is essential to the work of the Guidance Counsellor. Regular attendance at local IGC meetings and Counselling

Supervision is facilitated by non-timetabled afternoon, which is made easier at Coláiste Fionnchua as the school has a half day each Friday and the Guidance Counsellor attends counselling supervision and in-service as part of continuous C.P.D. as Guidance Counsellor on Friday afternoons, in her own time.

The IGC AGM provides a range of in-service through the provision of workshops and presentations relevant to our work. Additional in-service is organised at local or/and at national level and is open to all registered current members of the IGC. The DES supports the provision of in-service for IGC members through funding.

8. Testing

- 1. Assessment tests for incoming first year students comes under the remit of the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, assisted by the Guidance Counsellor, (CAT 4 Level E, GRTC, NRIT, WRAT Maths and WRAT Spelling).*
- 2. Students in all classes complete the WRAT Spelling Test at the end of September/ beginning of October.*
- 3. Third Year Testing.*

Cognitive Abilities Test (C.A.T. 4, Level F) is administered to the third Year students by the Guidance Counsellor assisted by the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, before the Christmas Examinations. The C.A.T. is machine scored and feedback is given to all students by the Guidance Counsellor in conjunction with senior cycle subject option decisions.

9. Protocol for meetings

- 1. Meetings with students*
- 2. Meetings with Parents/Guardians*

*All meetings are by appointment, except where the student is upset and/or needing support at any given time, the Guidance Counsellor will prioritise these students. Students are "signed out" by the subject teacher at the time of appointment and the Guidance Counsellor gives the student a note to give to their teacher on return to class *(See Appendix 5), indicating the duration of the session.*

Parents/Guardians make appointments with the Guidance Counsellor by telephoning the school. Appointments are usually conducted during the school day, but, may in certain circumstances be arranged after school. All parties are requested to inform each other if a cancellation is necessary.

On occasion, the Guidance Counsellor may request another staff member e.g. Year head, subject teacher or/and management to be present at a meeting. The student is

sometimes invited in for whole or part of the meeting with approval of Parents/Guardians. This gives the student responsibility, ownership and inclusion in the meeting outcomes. Notes are kept of all meetings by the Guidance Counsellor.

10. Links with Staff / Outside Agencies

The following demonstrates the whole school dimension of Guidance and the collaboration between the whole school community and the Guidance Counsellor.

- Management
- Year heads and class tutors
- Class Teachers
- Teaching Staff
- JCSP Co-ordinator (Guidance Counsellor)
- LCVP teachers
- LCA coordinator (Guidance Counsellor)
- Canteen/Caretaking Staff
- Pupils/ Student Council
- Parents...Parents Association...
- Past Pupils
- Pastoral Care team
- SPHE / RE teachers

Outside Agencies

- NEPS
- Social Workers
- G.P.'s, local accredited Counsellors
- Employers
- Colleges/Admission Officers
- Colleges of Further Education
- Community...Gardaí, Defence Forces
- DES...examination commission
- UCC+ Plus Programme Schools Liaison Officer
- CIT Access Schools Programme Co-ordinator

11. Policies

Guidance- Related Policies

- Anti-Bullying
- Critical Incident
- Code of Behaviour
- Additional Educational needs provision
- Pastoral Care

12. Research References

The Education Act, 1998 www.oireachtas.ie

Planning the School Guidance Programme. National Centre for Guidance in Education
www.ncge.ie

Planning the School Guidance Plan, School Planning Development Initiative (SDPI), 2004
www.sdpi.ie

Guidelines for Second Level Schools on the Implications of Section (C) of the Education Act 1998, relating to students access to appropriate guidance. DES, 2005.
www.education.ie

Circular letter No PPT 12/05: Guidance Provision in second-Level Schools.

Institute of Guidance Counsellors – Constitution and Code of Ethics 2004

Websites

Central Application Office (CAO) www.cao.ie

Department of Education and Science www.education.ie

Institute of Guidance Counsellors www.igc-edu.ie

National Centre for Guidance in Education www.ncge.ie

National Educational Psychological service www.neps.ie

National Qualifications Authority of Ireland www.nqai.ie

Qualifax www.qualifax.ie

13. Work in Progress

Planning for a Culturally Diverse Society