



Guidance Plan

November 12

2014

Our school guidance plan is a whole school plan, which endeavours to ensure that all students can avail of an appropriate guidance service tailored to suit their needs.

Coláiste an
Chroí Naofa

Introduction

Under the terms of the Education Act 1998, all schools are required to ‘ensure that all students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in educational and career choices’ (Section 9(c) of the Education Act 1998). Our school guidance plan is a whole school plan, which endeavours to ensure that all students can avail of an appropriate guidance service tailored to suit their needs. This plan was revised during the period September 2014 to December 2014. During this time evaluation of the student’s needs was assessed to ensure the guidance plan is current and up to date with student needs. This plan was developed through collaboration with the Principal, Deputy Principal and Guidance Counsellor. Finally it will be revised on a yearly basis to ensure its nature and content are kept current for the student population of that time.

Scope

The plan is designed specifically for Coláiste an Chroí Naofa. The school has 495 students. It is a co-educational school run under the trusteeship of CEIST. The guidance office is located on the ground floor. The office is equipped with a computer, printer, telephone and a careers library.

Guidance in second-level schools refers to a range of learning experience, provided in developmental sequences that assist students to develop self-management skills which will lead to effective choices and decisions about their lives. It encompasses the three separate, but interlinked, areas of

- Personal and Social Development
- Educational guidance
- Career guidance

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 guidance plan addresses the needs of all students at all levels within the school. As guidance is a whole school concern, the plan applies to school management and staff generally.

Rationale

The plan seeks to address the guidance needs of all students at all levels within the school. It ensures that resources are allocated to where they are needed most and allows for management and staff to contribute in a positive manner as guidance is seen as a whole school concern.

Links to school Mission statement

Coláiste an Chroí Naofa is a Catholic School of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. We aspire to nurture the individual student to allow them to develop to his or her full potential. The guidance plan aims to assist the holistic development of all students so that their individual talents are developed and enhanced. Community involvement is encouraged and through this interaction our students learn how to respect and value others, while also making a positive contribution to society.

Goals/Aims

The aim of this plan is to foster a sense of self within the students where they are aware of their strengths and weaknesses. By being aware of their strengths and weaknesses a student can make informed life decisions that are tailored to suit their individual needs. To identify and explore opportunities that may arise during their school life that may benefit them now and in the future. To aid each student to gain the competence needed to confide in the guidance counsellor, a member of the pastoral care team or a trusted teacher. Finally to assist each student in their quest for independence as this allows them to take responsibility for their own actions.

Formal Guidance

The formal guidance programme is delivered using two forms of intervention and various methodologies. These are mainly centred on one-to-one appointments with individual students and classroom guidance on a weekly basis or year group intervention as required.

Informal Guidance

The informal guidance programme involves liaising with teachers and management to promote cross curricular links and boost the development of a whole school policy. Meetings

and appointments with parents are encouraged, as they form a vital part of the school guidance plan.

Methods of Delivery of the Guidance Programme

5th and 6th year students are timetabled for one class period per week of formal guidance. Transition year students are split into three blocks where each student is timetabled for formal guidance once a week during their block. The Guidance Counsellor is a key member of the SPHE team, taking 2 groups in 1st year, 2nd year and 3rd year once a week.

Administration

All appointments are made with the guidance counsellor and the student receives a permission slip which they present to their teacher to be excused from class. Appointments are made during break. Students are not allowed to queue outside the guidance office, during class time, to confirm or wait for an appointment.

Theoretical Framework

Guidance will be offered on an individual or a group basis. The guidance programme utilises a full range of activities to address the student's needs. This incorporates the three main areas of guidance, personal, educational and vocational as set out by the NCGE.

Personal counselling provides students with a safe and supportive environment where they can explore their world, begin to overcome difficulties arising and help them achieve their full potential. Counselling is offered on an individual and group basis as required. Find definition of counselling.

Group counselling involves students taking on a helping role with other students under the supervision of the guidance counsellor and with the permission of the Year head or Principal.

Educational Guidance is developmental in nature and involves empowering students in the area of subject choice, study and examination skills and involves consulting parents about related matters where necessary.

Vocational Guidance allows students to recognise their talents and abilities. This also allows the student to make an informed choice and take responsibility for their own futures.

Target groups

As guidance is a whole school activity it aims to reach the entire student body. They are grouped as follows:

- Incoming first years
- First years
- Second years
- Third years
- Transition years
- Fifth years
- Sixth years
- Learning support students

The Guidance Programme

Incoming First Years

- Visit by Guidance Counsellor to Primary schools to speak to all 6th class students to introduce them to the school and invite them to the open night.
- Open night for parents and prospective students to show the facilities available in the school.
- Assessment of the students' academic profile using the CAT 3 level E.
- Feedback is given on the assessment and individual students' needs are addressed after discussion with NEPS.
- Visit by Guidance Counsellor to 6th class teachers of local feeder Primary Schools.
- Information night for parents to discuss subject choice, school ethos and transition from Primary School to Post Primary School.
- Feedback for teachers giving the profile of individual first years by Guidance Counsellor.
- Involved with setting up Learning Support classes with the Learning Support Department.

First years

- Introductory day – introduction to staff, school environment, distribution and explanation of timetable and lockers, introduction of pastoral care service and Guidance Counsellor.
- Information evening for parents of incoming first year students
- Learning support department and guidance department make a presentation on student profiles in the first week of term.
- Regular consultation with teachers to ensure that the students are settling into their new school.
- Study skills and study timetable session with all first years prior to November exams.
- One to one personal counselling when required
- Referrals from Guidance Counsellor and Learning support to NEPS when required.
- Guidance is delivered on a weekly basis through SPHE classes
- Attend parent teacher meetings

Objectives:

- To manage the transition from Primary to Secondary School
- To support students throughout this transition phase
- To encourage students to find the confidence to meet with the Guidance counsellor, member of pastoral care team or teacher regarding personal or educational issues.
- To monitor all students as they progress throughout the year.

Second years

- One to one guidance upon request or referral
- Group guidance through weekly contact with students in SPHE
- Monitor educational progress and study skills sessions
- Attend parent teacher meetings
- A careers poster competition, with prizes for the winners (time permitting).

Objectives

- To monitor students' progress.

- To encourage the students to confide in the Guidance Counsellor, member of the pastoral care team or teacher regarding personal or educational issues.

Third years

- Collaborate on a regular basis with year head and class teachers.
- Offer group, individual personal or educational counselling when required.
- Attend parent teacher meetings.
- Hold a parent information session regarding subject choice for students transferring into fifth year.
- Offer individual appointments for students making their subject choice for fifth year.
- Information for each individual class re transition year and subject choice for fifth year.
- Organise class discussions on study skills, timetabling and exam techniques.
- Linking in with SPHE and RE to cover decision making, conflict resolution and communication as well as developing the students self-concept by making them more aware of their skills, interests and potential.
- Senior cycle subject choice booklet is distributed to all students going into fifth year as well as being made available for parents.

Objectives:

- To identify those who need help both academically and personally.
- To identify and support those who are at risk of leaving school early.
- To assist students to make the correct subject choice for senior cycle.
- To support students who are struggling with either their home or school life.
- To prepare students for their first state exam.

Transition year

Guidance Counsellor has one 40 min class per week with transition year students. There are three groups of transition years who will rotate throughout the year. The first group being from September to November, second group from December to February and the third group from March to May.

- Development of occupation through exploring their past experiences and perceptions of occupations. Broadening their knowledge of careers base through use of occupations A-Z on www.careersportal.ie.
- To explore the students multiple intelligences and help them utilise their strong features.
- Completing a cover letter, CV and interview skills. What to expect when applying for a job and when they will go on work experience.
- Introduction to qualifax, careers portal, CAO and UCAS websites.
- Hold a parent information session regarding subject choice for students transferring into fifth year.
- Offer individual appointments for students making their subject choice for fifth year.
- Senior cycle subject choice booklet is distributed to all students going into fifth year as well as being made available for parents.

Objectives

- To aid students to identify key areas of interest for occupations they never met before. Preparation for the world of work.
- To encourage students to choose suitable work experience and evaluate that experience effectively.
- To develop self-awareness of personal skills
- To enable students to make informed subject choice for senior cycle.
- To support students who are struggling with either home or school life.

Fifth years

- Testing – aptitude testing, interest inventories and personality test. This includes DATS test, Career Interest Inventory and the career interest test and personality test available on www.careersportal.com.
- Each student will receive an individual appointment where the results of testing will be discussed as well as course and occupational interests.
- To inform students about the National Framework of Qualifications and where they are positioned on this as well as their opportunities to progress throughout the levels.
- The importance of setting goals, time management, study skills, styles of study and note taking.

- Allow student to become familiar with useful websites such as qualifax, careers portal, CAO and UCAS.
- By the end of the year the student should have a cover letter, CV, personal statement and career investigation completed.
- To facilitate group or individual counselling helping students with personal or educational needs.

Objectives

- To help each student achieve his/her full potential.
- To assist students in investigating career choices.
- To monitor all students progress both developmentally and educationally.

Sixth years

- One-to-one career interviews – each student receives a minimum of 2 individual appointments to discuss their options for when they are finished post primary education.
- Study skills and goal setting to be covered a number of times throughout the year.
- Parent teacher meetings
- Information night for parents re: CAO, Post Leaving Certificate courses (FETAC) and the world of work
- Inform students about open days and upcoming events that may be beneficial for students to attend
- Attend the Career options in Rochestown run by the IGC and the CIT open day.
- On-going work with students with regard subject levels, stress, anxiety and general good physical and mental health.

Weekly class topics

- ✓ Goals, study time management, note taking and study skills
- ✓ Review of subject levels and implications regarding points and entry requirements
- ✓ Applying to college in the UK (UCAS)
- ✓ Class presentations on the application process for the CAO
- ✓ Change of mind, accepting or deferring an offer from the CAO
- ✓ Post leaving certificate courses, apprenticeships and third level courses

- ✓ Research college courses using qualifax and careers portal
- ✓ Guest speakers from relevant colleges and organisations
- ✓ SUSI, HEAR and DARE
- ✓ Interview skills and CAO preparation
- ✓ Coping with change in the year ahead
- ✓ World of work – what to expect when involved in the working environment

Objectives

- To aid students in their progress through the academic year and assist them in making some sizeable decisions
- To encourage each student to strive to fulfil his/her potential
- To prepare students for life after school
- To assist them in making career decisions

The Guidance Service Year Plan

September – December

- ❖ Support students through transition phases into 1st year and into 4th /5th year
- ❖ Visit all feeder Primary Schools to invite them to the school open night
- ❖ Open night for 6th class students to view the school and its amenities
- ❖ Support around Junior Certificate Results
- ❖ Tracking of past 6th years
- ❖ Information evening for 6th year parents – CAO, FETAC, supports and the year ahead
- ❖ Attend the Cork Higher Options in Rochestown Park Hotel and CIT open day
- ❖ Individual appointments for 6th years (2 at the beginning of the year to discuss CAO/UCAS/FETAC options
- ❖ Provide all 6th year students with a calendar of events for the year ahead
- ❖ Introduction to exam system and study for first year students
- ❖ Study skills for third years, including organisation preparation for the year ahead
- ❖ Mental health week for all students with events organised for students during the week
- ❖ Support around Christmas exams 1st, 3rd and 6th years in particular
- ❖ 1st year National Group Reading Test (NGRT) in line with literacy

- ❖ Differential Aptitude Test (DAT) 5th year students
- ❖ Begin 5th year appointments with regard to results of test and future career options
- ❖ Career and college talks from visiting speakers
- ❖ Ensuring continued support for all students through the year
- ❖ Pastoral Care meetings on a continued basis to maintain support
- ❖ Meeting with year heads and class teachers to ensure a holistic approach in the Guidance Department

January – May

- ❖ Career and College talks from visiting speakers
- ❖ Subject choice for 1st years and 3rd/TY students – class work and subject choice booklet
- ❖ Continued 5th year appointments
- ❖ Individual appointments for all students undertaking subject choice
- ❖ Subject choice evenings for parents and students of 1st/3rd and TY
- ❖ Well being programme for all students from 1st to 6th year
- ❖ Post Leaving Certificate interview support
- ❖ Visits to Primary Schools to gather background information on incoming 1st year students
- ❖ Review of 2nd year progress and continued study skills support
- ❖ 2nd year Careers Poster Competition
- ❖ Continued support for all students in exam years and non-exam years in particular
- ❖ Review the Guidance service at the end of the year to ensure it is student centred and focused on the current needs of the students in the school.
- ❖ Pastoral Care meetings on a continued basis to maintain support
- ❖ Meeting with year heads and class teachers to ensure a holistic approach in the Guidance Department

All year: ongoing counselling with all students including Personal, Educational, Vocational, Individual, class and group work. Liaise with NEPS, social workers and other support services. Finally classes are provided for Transition years, 5th years and 6th years.

Testing:

Cognitive Ability Test (CAT) 3 Level E is administered by the Guidance Counsellor to all incoming 1st year students. This is machine scored to reduce the standard error. It is conducted to highlight any specific difficulties a student may be having.

National Group Reading Test (NGRT) is administered by the Guidance Counsellor to all current 1st year students. This is machine scored. The NGRT is conducted as part of the Literacy strategy in the school to obtain reading age of all 1st year students. This allows the school to put strategies in place to improve the literacy level of our students, for example drop everything and read week.

Differential Aptitude Test (DAT) is administered by the Guidance Counsellor to all 5th year students. The student is assessed on the basis of verbal reasoning, numerical reasoning, abstract reasoning, mechanical reasoning, perceptual speed & accuracy and overall educational attainment. The results of this test will be delivered to the student in an individual appointment where we will discuss the student's strengths and weaknesses. These results will assist them in career decision making and also allow them to improve their weaker areas.

Other Guidance Service Activities:

- Network with local Guidance Counsellor and attend 5 supervision meetings provided by the IGC
- Offer assistance with other teachers in dealing with referrals, bullying etc.
- Liaise with the year heads, class teachers and other members of staff
- Oversee the Guidance Service – telephone, emails, filing, updating the careers library
- Evaluating the Guidance Service – feedback from students and staff on the running of the Guidance service
- Maintain individual records
- Meet with parents upon request
- Keep up to date with continuous professional development

Guidance areas for development

- Improvement in service offered to 2nd years
- Improvement of the delivery of careers in 5th year to include structured project work
- Links with other staff with regard the student's needs and risks they may be under
- Links with the Special Educational Needs department

Links to other School Policies

- ✓ Anti-Bullying Policy
- ✓ Code of Discipline
- ✓ Enrolment Policy
- ✓ Child Protection Policy
- ✓ S. P. H. E Policy
- ✓ Learning Support

Protocol for Meetings

1. Meetings with students

All meetings are made by appointments. Students may make an appointment to see the guidance counsellor at any stage of the year. Self-referral is encouraged but students can be referred by others also. Our students are encouraged to speak to any member of staff they feel comfortable with from year head to class teacher. Therefore referral can come from any member of staff. An appointment can be made during break time. Once an appointment is made the student is given an appointment slip to give to their class teacher to ask for permission. If the student does not gain permission the appointment will be rescheduled.

2. Meetings with parents

Parents/Guardians may make appointments with the Guidance Counsellor through the school Secretary. The Guidance Counsellor may request another member of staff to be present at the meeting, for example the year head or class teacher. The student may be invited to attend all or some of the meeting with the approval of the Parent/Guardian. Records of the meeting may be kept.

3. Record keeping Procedure

Detailed records may be kept from all guidance counselling meetings. Guidance records are kept for 7 years after the student has left. Notes shall be kept as brief as possible and will be completed as soon as possible after the meeting.

Reporting Procedures

In all guidance meetings with students a contract is made. This means that the counsellor and the student have discussed confidentiality and its limitations. The contract is made at the beginning of the initial session and the student is reminded of it regularly throughout on-going counselling. Confidentiality is upheld unless the student is talking about something, that the counsellor feels, may put the student or another person in danger. The counsellor may feel it is in the best interest of the student to tell a teacher/ year head/ management or parent of a particular difficulty. If this is the case it is only done with the knowledge and hopefully agreement of the student. As guidance is a whole school issue, this policy recognises the responsibility of all staff to adhere to child protection guidelines. Staff will report their concerns about a student to the Designated Liaison Person, the Principal. In the Principals absence the staff will report to the Deputy Designated Liaison Person, the Deputy Principal.

Guidance Counsellors Career Development

To maintain qualified membership of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC) the Guidance Counsellor will undertake 10 hours of continuous professional development each year. The Guidance Counsellor will attend counselling supervision and branch meetings.

Reviewing and Evaluating the Plan

Critical reflection and evaluation are a very important part of the School Guidance Programme. The aim of conducting a yearly review of the plan is to measure the strengths and weaknesses of the Guidance service offered to the students. It is to ensure that the students' needs are continually addressed in the service being offered. Finally we will assess whether or not the service is delivered from a whole school perspective. Therefore the plan will be reviewed at the beginning of each school year. Feedback will be obtained from students, staff and parents.

Bibliography

- The Education Act, 1998.
- Planning the School Guidance Programme, National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) 2004.
- Planning the School Guidance Plan, School Development Planning Initiative (SDPI), 2004.
- Guidelines for Second Level Schools on the Implications of Section 9(c) of the Education Act 1998, relating to students' access to appropriate guidance. Department of Education and Science, 2005.
- Circular Letter No. PPT 12/05: Guidance Provision in Second-Level Schools.