

Coláiste Mhuire, Thurles Whole School Guidance Plan



June 2014

Coláiste Mhuire, Thurles Whole School Guidance Plan**Rationale of Policy****Education Act, 1998 and Coláiste Mhuire's Mission Statement**

This School Guidance Policy reflects the ethos and spirit of Coláiste Mhuire Thurles and it has been devised and developed in accordance with Section 9 of the Education Act 1998. Section 9(c) of that act states that a school "shall use its available resources to ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices." Section 9(d) elaborates further by stating that a school "shall promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students ... in consultation with their parents having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school."

The ethos and spirit of Coláiste Mhuire is embodied in the school's Mission Statement, which states "Our Mission at Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed aspires to develop a caring and inclusive learning community which optimises the potential of each student."

Definition of Guidance -What is Guidance and Counselling in schools?

Guidance and Counselling refers to a range of learning experiences provided in a developmental sequence, designed to assist students in making choices about their lives and to help students in making transitions based on these choices. The Guidelines for Second Level Schools on the Implications of Section 9(c) of the Education Act, 1998 identify Guidance and Counselling as a single process that "aims to help students to develop an awareness and acceptance of their talents and abilities, to explore possibilities and opportunities; to grow in independence and to take responsibility for themselves, to make informed choices about their lives and to follow through on those choices." (Pages 4,5) These choices may be categorized into three distinct areas: (i) Personal and Social, (ii) Educational and (iii) Career. The Department of Education's guidelines state that "counselling in schools may include personal, educational, career counselling, or combinations of these."

Background to Policy**A Consultative Process**

This School Guidance Policy has evolved and developed from a consultative process involving staff, students, parents, and the Board of Management of Coláiste Mhuire. This policy is not rigid but rather it reflects the uniqueness of Coláiste Mhuire in its own particular context and circumstances.

Models of Good Practice

In the preparation and development of this School Guidance Plan, Coláiste Mhuire has been guided by the models of good practice in school guidance planning as outlined by the Institute of Guidance Counsellors, the National Centre for Guidance in Education, and the School Development Planning Initiative. Moreover, this policy has been developed within the parameters of the guidelines of the Department of

Education and Science (Guidelines for Second Level Schools on the Implications of Section 9(c) of the Education Act 1998, relating to student's access to appropriate guidance, and Circular Letter No. PPT 12/05: Guidance Provision in Second-Level Schools). Coláiste Mhuire views this school policy and school guidance plan as a work in progress and all of the stakeholders to this plan are committed to reviewing and improving this policy on a regular basis.

Related School Policies

This School Guidance Policy and Coláiste Mhuire's Guidance Programme is consistent with and supported by a range of other School Policies:

Guidance Counsellor's Department Plan

Code of Behaviour

Anti-Bullying Policy

Policy on Substance Abuse and Misuse

SPHE Policy

Internet and Acceptable Use Policy

Attendance Policy

Data Protection Policy

Special Education Needs Policy

Leaving Cert Applied and Transition Year Policy

Linkages to other Programmes

Coláiste Mhuire acknowledges the relevance of and importance of SPHE and Religion to the social and personal development focus of Guidance and Counselling. A full description and account of both SPHE and Religion in Coláiste Mhuire is provided in their respective department plans. Coláiste Mhuire recognises the significant contribution that the Leaving Cert Vocational Programme, the Leaving Cert Applied and the Transition Year Programme make in providing students with appropriate and relevant Guidance-related activities. This Whole School Guidance Plan recognises the significance of the 1st Year Subjects Taster Programme and all other cross curricular links (for example Guidance and CSPE, Guidance and Communication/Work Experience Modules, Guidance and the PLC programmes). Coláiste Mhuire also recognises the guidance contribution made by Post Leaving Certificate Programmes in assisting students to explore their educational and career prospects and in enabling PLC students to progress to Higher Education or in making the transition to the workplace.

Objective of Policy

To ensure that the students of Coláiste Mhuire Thurles have access to guidance, that is appropriate to their needs, stage of development, and their school programme.

Aims of Policy

- To promote the development and growth of each student on a personal, social, educational and career basis.

- To ensure that guidance initiatives and programmes in Coláiste Mhuire are delivered in a developmental sequence that is relevant and appropriate to all students.
- To provide a framework for the delivery of guidance programmes within our school and in a manner that takes account of the diverse and particular needs of students with special educational needs, students of all ability levels and students from different backgrounds and cultures, up to and including post leaving certificate students.

Guidance Planning Committee

Ms. Karen Stakelum (PLC Co-Ordinator)

Ms. Ann Conroy (Programme Coordinator)

Ms Clare Wallace (Deputy Principal)

Ms. Patricia Hickey (SPHE)

Ms. Olivia Ryan (HSCL)

Ms Annemarie Purtill (LCVP)

Mr. Liam O'Brien (Guidance Counsellor)

Guidance Team

This School Guidance Policy and the associated School Guidance Programmes reflect the ongoing contribution of the following individuals and groups:

Guidance Counsellor (A detailed account of the Role of the Guidance Counsellor's is provided in the Guidance Department's Subject Plan)

The Principal and Deputy Principal

The Learning Support team

The Programme Coordinator

The Home School Community Liaison Officer

The PLC Co-Ordinator and tutors

The Religious Education team and Chaplain

The PE and Games Team

The Year Heads

The Class Tutors

The SPHE Teachers

The CSPE Teachers

Subject Teachers

Special Needs Assistants

The Le Cheile Team

School Completion Programme Personnel

School Secretarial Staff

The Caretaker and all other Ancillary Staff

Whole School Guidance Activities

The Student 'Guidance' Team work together to provide the following formal guidance services during the school year: Assessment/Aptitude Testing of Students Tests; School Induction and Orientation for Incoming First Years; Pre-Transition

supports for new students; Study Skills Workshops and Study Skills class at first year; Information and Open Nights for Parents and Students; Extra-Curricular Activities; Home-School visits; Educational College Excursions; Work place visits; Visits by Guest Speakers; Visits to Careers Exhibitions and College Open Days; Engagement with student mental health programmes and support agencies. In addition to the above formal school guidance activities, guidance and support is provided informally and on a regular basis in a variety of contexts by all staff. There are a range of other student supports within the school including the learners' council (mainstream and PLC) and the Board of Management.

Guidance Provision

Coláiste Mhuire is committed to employing a team approach in the provision of a range of learning experiences and developmental opportunities to all students. These experiences and opportunities, which will be appropriate and relevant to student needs, shall enable the growth and development of all students and shall assist students in making choices and transitions. (for example; Transitions from Primary to Secondary School, from Junior Cycle to Senior Cycle, from School to Further Education and the World of Work).

A number of mechanisms are used in order to assist students in making choices. These include:

- (1) **Assessment:** The Guidance Counsellor, the Learning Support Co-Ordinator and other associated staff members carry out assessments such as the C.A.T, Career Inventories and other suitable testing instruments.
- (2) **Educational Skills:** Junior Cert. and Leaving Cert. students are given instruction on Study Skills and Examination Techniques in 3rd Year and 6th Year respectively. All junior cycle students are provided with formal study skills methodologies.
- (3) Students are provided with information in 1st Year and 3rd Year that helps them to make decisions on subject choice, subject level and programme choice, which is appropriate to each student's aptitude and interests and which is cognisant of students career aspirations. A Homework Club, which provides assistance to targeted junior cycle students is in operation. After School Study is available to other if they wish to avail of it.
- (4) **Vocational Guidance Interviews:** The Guidance Counsellor holds interviews with Fifth Year and Sixth Year Students to assist them in identifying Third Level courses and career areas that correspond to their interests and aptitudes. The Guidance Counsellor also meets with Leaving Cert Applied students to help them to formulate a Career Action Plan. The Guidance Counsellor is available to meet with and provide support to PLC students on further study and career options and other educational matters. We also use the School Business Partnership initiative to prepare students for interview and the world of work.
- (5) **Counselling:** Students are referred for counselling to the Guidance Counsellor by the School Management, Board of Management, Parents and members of) staff. A student may also refer him/herself for counselling, which can assist students to explore their feelings and to cope with challenges and problems. Students can be

referred to the HSCL Officer, the SCP team, year head and NEPS for support as required.

(6) Information: Students are provided with information on external agencies and supports where necessary by all relevant staff.

(7) Onward Referral Service: The individual student is referred, where it is deemed necessary by the student support team* to external individuals/agencies. Examples include: General Practitioners, The HSE Mid-West Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, The National Educational Psychological Service, psychologists.

PLEASE NOTE: An appointments system operates for all Personal Counselling, Careers Counselling and Vocational Guidance Interviews. The appointments system helps to minimise disruption to classes and the co-operation of teachers in facilitating time for guidance and counselling appointments is greatly appreciated.

* membership of the student support team is:

Liam O'Brien – Guidance Counsellor
Olivia Ryan – HSCL
Roisin Slattery – SCP
Denis Quinn – Principal
Clare Wallace – Deputy Principal
Year Heads as necessary

Whole School Guidance Programme

1st Years	(i) Information Visits to Primary Schools by Principal
	(ii) Communication with parents, children and primary school principals/teachers of incoming students (by way of meetings)
	(iii) Administration of Tests for Diagnostic Purposes
	(iv) Induction Programme and Le Cheile
	(v) Induction Night for Parents/Guardians of 1st Years early in the first term
	(vi) One to One Meetings of First Years as requested
	(vii) Monitoring of students transition from Primary to Secondary Level by way of meetings with Year Head and School Management
	(viii) Rapport building between Class Tutors, Year-Head and First Year students
	(ix) Information and advice on subject choice for 2 nd &3 rd Year
	(x) Regular informal guidance and support by all staff
	(xi) HSCL programme for first year parents
	(xii) Information from Learning Support team to staff on new first year
	(xiii) Weekly Study Skills class
	(xvi) Guidance/Counselling sessions as required
2nd Years	(i) Support by way of the Class Tutor and Year-Head System
	(ii) Regular contact with Principal and Deputy Principal
	(iii) Career Guidance and/or counselling sessions as required
	(iv) Informal Guidance and support by all staff
	(v) Study skills class through the RE Programme
	(vi) Online resources
3 rd Years	(i) Study Skills and Exam Techniques Presentation and Workshop(s)
	(ii) Information and Presentation on Subject and programme choice (to students by fellow students and staff and to parents)
	(iv) One to One consultations on programme choice and subject choice as requested
	(v) Counselling and Career Guidance Meetings as required
	(vi) One Guidance class per week
	(vii) Support from Year-Heads and Class Tutors
	(viii) Regular contact with Principal and Deputy Principal
	Reassessment of students by way of CAT3g

Transition year	(i) Personal and Student Profile
	(ii) Career Inventory Assessment and CATs for Guidance
	(iii) Study Skills/Time Management
	(iv) Multiple Intelligences theory
	(v) Letters of Application and CV Preparation 4th Years
	(vi) Work Experience Preparation
	(vii) Work Experience Programme (Two Weeks)
	(viii) Work Experience eportfolio
	(ix) Guest Speakers
	(X) 3 rd Level/PLC/Apprenticeship Options
	(xi) One to One Guidance Interview
	(xii) Course and Career Research on Qualifax, Career Directions etc.
	(xiii) Weekly Guidance Class
	(xiv) Counselling sessions as required

5th Years	(i) Study Skills and Exam Techniques
	(ii) Points Awareness Worksheet
	(iii) Weekly Guidance Classes
	(iv) Visiting Speakers from colleges
	(v) School Business Partnership interviews and feedback
	(vi) Support by way of the Class Tutor and Year-Head System
	(vi) Informal guidance and support by all staff
	(vii) Support from Principal and Deputy Principal
	(viii) One to one Guidance Meeting, and counselling sessions as required

6 th year	(i) Attendance and participation at various Careers Events and Options Conferences
	(ii) Visiting Speakers from colleges and professional bodies
	(iii) Vocational Guidance Interviews (one to One Meetings Between the Guidance Counsellor and Individual students)
	(iv) CAO Form -Information, and Preparation
	(v) Weekly Guidance Class (vi) Points System Information
	(vii) Course and Career research on Qualifax, Pathfinder etc.
	(viii) Information on Sports/Other Scholarships, Student Accommodation
	(ix) Career Inventories
	(x) Study Skills and Exam Techniques Workshop
	(xi) Accepting CAO Offers and Change of Mind Form
	(xii) UCAS -Application Process
	(xiii) The Third Level Grants Schemes (Susi)
	(xiv) Budgeting at Third Level Access Programmes

	(xv) Support from Principal and Deputy Principal
	(xvi) Regular contact with and support from Year-Head and Class Tutor
	(xvii) Counselling sessions as required
LCA	(i) Weekly Guidance Class
	(ii) One-to-One Guidance Interview
	(iii) Information on Progression Routes into Further Education (including PLC course options, Apprenticeships, Garda Siochana)
	(iv) Careers Exhibition (LCA 2)
	(v) Work on Qualifax, Career Directions and Careers Portal websites
	(vi) Visiting Speakers
	(vii) Presentation and Communication Workshop (LCA 1)
	(viii) Exam techniques
	(ix) Support from Principal, Deputy Principal, Co-Ordinator and Class Tutor
	(x) Work Experience (one day per week)
	(xi) Preparation for Work Experience and Reflection on Work Experience
	(xii) Social Education and Enterprise Modules
	(xiii) Counselling sessions as required
PLC	(i) CAO Information and Application Procedures Workshop
	(ii) UCAS workshop
	(iii) FETAC Links Scheme -Progression Routes
	(iv) Workshop for teachers of communications on interviews
	(v) Mock Interviews in the communications component
	(vi) One to one meetings as requested and required
	(vii) Information on Budgeting, Scholarships, Resources, Campus Accommodation
	(viii) Work Experience Module
	(ix) Communication Module
	(x) Informal Guidance from PLC Co-Ordinator, tutors, Principal and Deputy Principal
	(xi) Morning Information Session, and Open Night for PLC Courses
	(xii) School Visits by PLC Co-Ordinator and other staff
	Inclusion of course information on Qualifax and other areas
	Visiting speakers

Resources and Supports:

- Department of Education and Science Resources
- Staff guidance provision within the general teaching allocation (.5)
- School Funds as Resources allow
- Career Guidance Office and Guidance/Counselling Meeting Area

- Careers Library (currently administered by the Guidance Counsellor, but to be relocated to new School Library)
- Student Support team
- School Completion team
- Regular Meetings with school management team with their Guidance Counsellor and with other staff members (HSCL, Year-Heads, Class Teachers, Tutors, SNA's) and with parents/guardians
- Links with the community and with other agencies and groups that support students and parents
- Links with 3rd Level Colleges (Admissions, Access Officers, School Liaison Officers), FAS, PLC Colleges
- Links with Business and Industry -Work Experience etc.
- School Business Partnership
- Transition year and LCA work-experience links
- LIT aspirations programme

Monitoring of the Guidance Policy/Guidance Plan

The School Management, in consultation with the Guidance Counsellor and the School Guidance Team will monitor the implementation of the Guidance Policy and its associated Guidance Programmes.

Evaluation and Development of Guidance Policy

This School Guidance Policy will be subject to ongoing evaluation. We are committed to this through surveying parents, staff and students.

Coláiste Mhuire's evaluation of the policy will be guided by the following questions:

Is the guidance plan working?

Are the guidance programmes being provided in the most effective manner?

Are all students being provided with appropriate guidance?

What areas of the Guidance Plan/Guidance Policy require modification and improvement?

What are the areas that need to be developed in terms of guidance provision and programme delivery?

The guidance team and the school community more generally have an important role to play in the evolution and development of the Guidance Policy. The Whole School Guidance Planning Group welcomes contributions and feedback from the entire school community and from all other stakeholders in relation to Guidance Provision and Guidance Programmes.

Review

There will be a full review of the Guidance policy after a minimum of two years. The review group will comprise representatives of all the stakeholders to the Guidance Policy/Guidance Plan. The review process will involve surveying students, parents, teachers and all other stakeholders to the Guidance Plan.

Areas for Development

Priority Areas for Development

- To develop online resources and incorporate ICT into guidance
- To progress towards a “work week” focusing on careers
- To become part of the Trinity Access Programme network