

**LORETO COLLEGE,
ST. STEPHEN'S GREEN,
DUBLIN 2.**

WHOLE SCHOOL GUIDANCE PLAN

CL	Circular Letter
DES	Department of Education and Skills
DLP	Designated Liaison Person (Child Protection)
DDLDP	Deputy Designated Liaison Person
DSGC	Directors of Studies in Guidance Counselling
ESL	Early School Leavers
ETB	Education and Training Board
FET	Further Education and Training
HE	Higher Education
HPS	Health Promoting Schools
HSE	Health Service Executive
ICT	Information & Communication Technology
IGC	Institute of Guidance Counsellors
JC	Junior Cycle
JCSA	Junior Cycle Student Achievement
JCT	Junior Cycle for Teachers
LC	Leaving Certificate
LCA	Leaving Certificate Applied
LLG	Lifelong Guidance
NBSS	National Behaviour Support Service
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
NCGE	National Centre for Guidance in Education
NCSE	National Council for Special Education
NEPS	National Educational Psychological Service
PDST	Professional Development Service for Teachers PTR
SC	Pupil -Teacher Ratio
SEN	Senior Cycle
SEO	Special Educational Needs
SGH	Student Enrichment Officer
SOL	School Guidance Handbook
SPHE	Statement of Learning
SSE	Social, Personal and Health Education
SUSI	School Self –Evaluation
TY	Student Universal Support
WGS	Transition Year
	Whole School Guidance



1. Introduction

.....

1.1
Definitions.....

1.2 Requirements on Schools.....

1.3 Scope

1.4 Relationship to Mission Statement

1.5 Rationale for a Whole School Guidance Plan

1.6 Aims & Objectives

.....

2. The model of provision

2.1 A continuum of support.....

2.2 Areas of Learning and Competences.....

2.3 Whole School Overview.....

 A. Personal and Social Development

 B. Educational Guidance

 C. Career Development

3. Guidance: A whole school activity - Roles and Responsibilities

- (a) Board of Management
- (b) Senior Management
- (c) Guidance Counsellor
- (d) Chaplain
- (e) Pastoral care team
- (f) Learning Support/SEN Coordinator
- (g) Subject teachers
- (h) Other support staff (year heads etc.)
- (i) Externally contracted counsellor
- (j) Guest Speakers
- (k) Parents
- (l) Students

4. Current Whole School Guidance Provision & Programme..... Page 14

4.1 Time allocation – individual, small group and class group..... Page 14

4.2 Delivery of Guidance & Counselling (1 to 1, small group etc.)..... Page 14

4.3 Junior & Senior Cycles Guidance Programme

5. Other

Considerations..... Page 31

- 5.1 School structure
- 5.2 Appointments
- 5.3 Confidentiality
- 5.4 Ethical considerations and Accountability
- 5.5 Reporting & referrals procedures
- 5.6 Record Keeping Procedures
- 5.7 Other agencies
- 5.8 Testing & Assessment
- 5.9 Bereavement Support
- 5.10 Role of Visitors
- 5.11 Use of ICT in guidance
- 5.12 CPD

6. Monitoring, review and evaluation.....

7.

Appendices.....

.....

1. Introduction

Loreto College, St. Stephen's Green is an all-girls, fee-paying Roman Catholic College under the trusteeship of the members of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, known in Ireland as the Loreto Sisters. The Provincial Superior of the Loreto Sisters is the Patron of the school under the terms of the Education Act, 1998. The patronage and trustee functions are carried out by the Loreto Education Trust Board, appointed for that purpose by the Provincial Superior. The Loreto Education Trust Board delegates the administration of the College to the Board of Management.

The Whole School Guidance Plan is student-centred in its approach. The promotion and enhancement of self-esteem and life-skills and the development of potential – academic, personal, social and emotional – leading to a greater personal autonomy for all students are its central goals. All staff members have a vital role to play in student care and therefore have a role to play in the delivery of the Whole School Guidance Programme.

This plan forms part of the Whole School Plan, it is not a rigid template and it will be evaluated, reviewed and updated routinely.

1.1 Definitions

Guidance in schools refers to a range of learning experiences provided in a developmental sequence 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 and career guidance.

Counselling offered within a guidance context 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 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. Counselling may include personal counselling, educational counselling, career counselling or combinations of these.

1.2 Requirements on Schools

This plan is being developed in response to relevant legislation and resource documents. Guidance is a statutory requirement for schools under Section 9 (c) of the Education Act 1998: *'to ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices'*. Other requirements and guidelines include:

- ✓ The "Guidelines for Second-Level Schools on the Implications of Section 9(c) of the Education Act 1998, relating to students "Access to Appropriate Guidance" (DES 2005) state that *'the school's guidance plan is a whole school responsibility'*
- ✓ Planning the School Guidance Programme National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE), 2004
- ✓ Guidelines for Second Level Schools on the Implications for Section 9 (c) of the Education Act 1998, relating to students" access to appropriate guidance. Inspectorate, Department of Education and Skills, 2005
- ✓ Looking at Guidance, Teaching and Learning in Post-Primary Schools Inspectorate Department of Education and Skills, 2009

- ✓ Circular 0009/2012, “Staffing arrangements in Post-Primary Schools for the 2012/13 school year” restates this position: *‘each school develops collaboratively a school guidance plan as a means of supporting the needs of its students.’* It is against this backdrop and in the context of the decision in Budget 2012 to withdraw the provision for ex-quota guidance hours to schools that this whole school guidance plan was originally prepared supported by ‘The Framework for Considering Provision of Guidance Post-Primary Schools’ issued in 2012 by ACCS, ETBI, JMB and NAPD.
- ✓ NCGE, 2017, *A Whole School Guidance Framework*
- ✓ Circular Letter 0015/2017 *Arrangements for the Implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle with particular reference to school years 2017/18 and 2018/19 (DES, 2017d)* highlights that Wellbeing, a new area of learning
- ✓ ‘*A Whole School Guidance Framework*’ issued in 2017 by the NCGE which supports schools in the planning and provision of a whole school approach to guidance.

1.3 Scope

This plan applies to the entire community of Loreto the Green. Its interventions and supports apply particularly to junior, senior, minority, special educational or personal needs etc. of all students as they progress through their second-level education.

1.4 Relationship to Mission Statement

The school Guidance Plan supports the values of the school outlined in its Mission Statement:

Guidance in Loreto College is a whole school approach which emphasises the Personal, Social, Vocational and Educational Development of all students, so that;

‘In an atmosphere of mutual respect and justice, we are a community that aims to provide a rich and diverse curriculum catering for the needs of each individual student. We provide a holistic education wherein we strive for excellence in the pursuit of knowledge. Social concerns and spiritual values are central to our educational philosophy, while sporting and cultural endeavours are encouraged. Each student is challenged to realise her full potential and to recognise the dignity of each human being.’

Our objectives are conditioned by the good practice disseminated by the Department of Education and Skills, The Institute of Guidance Counsellors, the National Centre for Guidance in Education, and the SDPI.

1.5 Rationale for a Whole School Guidance Plan

The DES (2005) Guidelines state that schools should
 "...develop a comprehensive guidance plan as part of their overall school development plan, taking into account the needs of students, available resources and contextual factors" (DES, 2005; pg. 4).

NCGE (2004) defines the Whole School Guidance Plan as

“... The document in which the school, in a systematic way, defines the guidance programme it offers, and states how resources are organised to deliver the programme.” (NCGE, 2004: pg. 8).

Guidance is a whole school activity and our approach is collaboratively developed. This collaboration involves a variety of approaches such as feedback from inspection reports, parental and student attitudinal surveys or via other initiatives. This whole school activity is undertaken as a means of supporting the needs of students. As a school we believe it is important that all members of staff fully recognise and ensure that guidance permeates every aspect of school life.

This Guidance plan has evolved for the purpose of providing guidance to students. It outlines the school's approach to guidance generally and explains how students are supported and assisted in making choices and successful transitions in the personal and social, educational and career areas. It gives formal structure to a whole-school approach to this provision. Additionally, it informs parents, students and teachers that guidance will be delivered in an integrated and proactive way. The guidance plan also distinguishes between the competencies available within the school to support a student in situations where referral to the Health services or advising parents on the need to consider individual referral to a medical professional is warranted.

1.6 Aims and Objectives

The Whole School Guidance Plan aims to:

- Set out the learning experiences and activities of the guidance programme
- Reflect the needs of both Junior and Senior Cycle students
- Achieve a balance in the provision of personal/social, educational and career guidance offered to students.

The objectives of this Whole School Guidance plan enable students achieve the following outcomes:

- To clarify educational, social and career goals
- To address personal issues
- 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
- To support the development of every student
- To acknowledge and support each person's role in the school community
- To provide an environment where each individual can develop self-esteem and a sense of personal responsibility
- To provide an environment where each individual can develop a place in society and a responsibility to society
- To nurture teaching and learning so that each individual can reach his or her full potential
- To monitor the well-being of all students

To apply best practice in the protection of students and the promotion of their welfare, within the resources available in accordance with DES and School Child Protection Policy

- To work effectively with statutory authorities and outside agencies as and when required
- To ensure that any allegations of abuse are dealt with justly and promptly in accordance with the Children First Guidelines 2017

2. The Model of Provision

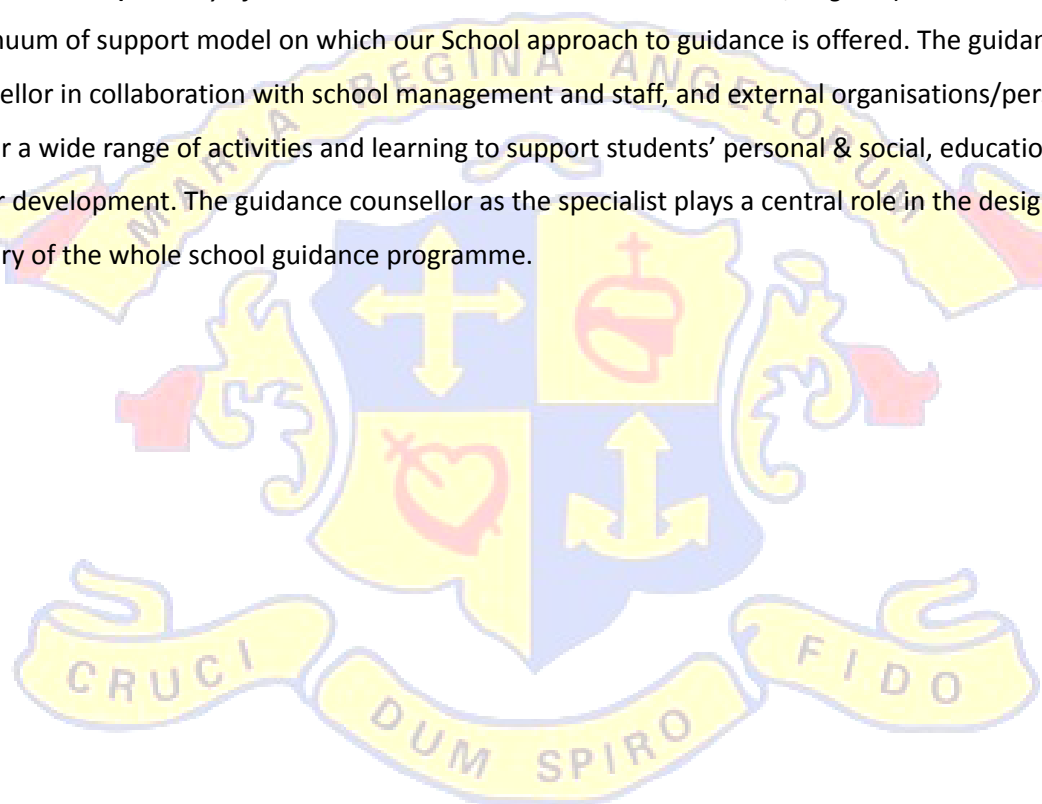
2.1 A Continuum of Support

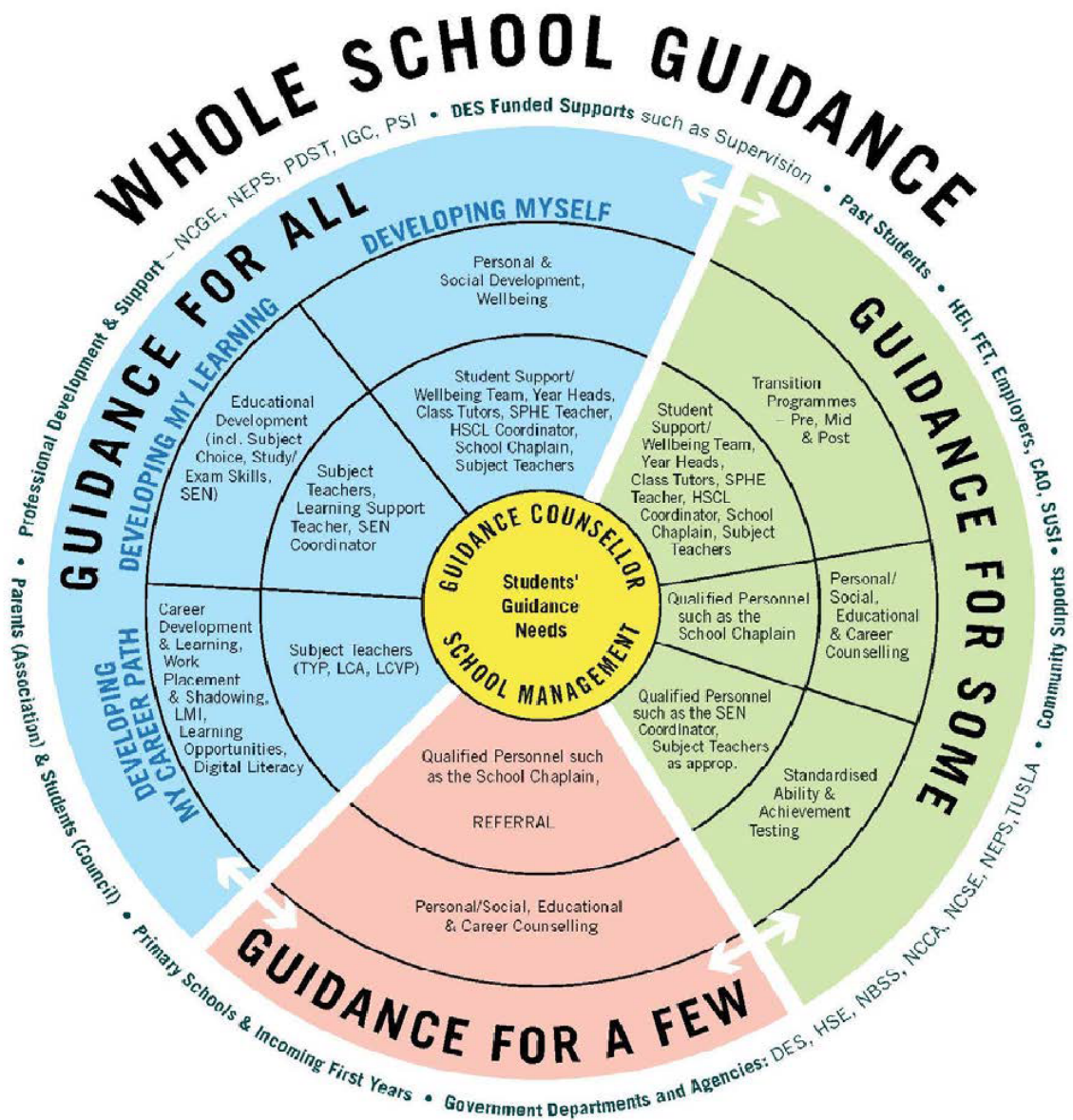
A continuum of support model is applied to the Loreto College guidance programme. In applying the continuum, our whole school guidance programme aims to meet the needs of students along a varied range, from a whole school approach to group and individualised approaches. The continuum model can be applied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

- A) **Guidance For All** – provided to all students to support personal & social, educational, and career development, and students making transitions (incoming first years, junior cycle to senior cycle and from senior cycle into apprenticeships, FET, HE and employment). The guidance counsellor as the specialist has a key role to play in coordinating the planning and delivery of the whole school guidance programme and in the provision of guidance to students. A whole school approach is employed in delivering the learning and teaching activities of the school guidance programme which include, career education programmes, SPHE and Wellbeing in Junior Cycle, guidance modules and work experience/placement .
- B) **Guidance For Some** – provided to specific groups of students to support personal & social, educational and career development and transition making. Such groups of students will typically include, for example, students in senior cycle, especially 6th year, who will benefit from group and one-to-one guidance counselling to support educational and career decision making, and students who are making transitions. Transition points include, primary school into first year of post-primary education, junior cycle to senior cycle, and school to higher/further education and training, apprenticeships and employment. Some students may require additional and more intensive support in making transitions. Group/one-to-one guidance counselling will require the expertise of specialist school staff, such as the guidance counsellor working in collaboration with the pastoral care team, SPHE teacher, SEN Coordinator, year heads, class tutors and the school Chaplain.

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

Figure 1 below (courtesy of NCGE: *A Whole School Guidance Framework*, Page 14) shows the continuum of support model on which our School approach to guidance is offered. The guidance counsellor in collaboration with school management and staff, and external organisations/personnel, deliver a wide range of activities and learning to support students' personal & social, educational and career development. The guidance counsellor as the specialist plays a central role in the design and delivery of the whole school guidance programme.





2.2 Areas of Learning and Competences

Guidance-related learning starts in early childhood education and continues through students' primary and post primary education. As part of this holistic development, students in Loreto College are exposed to 3 areas of guidance-related learning so as to allow them develop in 8 areas of competence (Figure 2 below courtesy of NCGE: A Whole School Guidance Framework, Page 16). These areas of learning aim to build on the learning that students will have experienced during their years in primary education.

Areas of Learning

Competences

Developing Myself	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developing & maintaining self-esteem & a positive self-concept• Interacting effectively with others (face-to-face & online)• Developing & growing throughout life
Developing My Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employing effective personal learning/exam strategies• Making educational choices in line with career aspirations
Developing My Career Path	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Using career related information & sources appropriately• Understanding the world of work & life roles• Managing career development & decision making

Outcomes are presented as indicative competences in this plan relating to the three areas of learning. These outcomes relate to the development of self-awareness and self-knowledge, knowledge of learning and work opportunities, and applying this knowledge to make effective transitions and decision making. These competencies are built upon in a variety of School programmes such as:

Junior Cycle - The three areas of learning and associated competences are linked with the *Principles* underpinning the *Framework for Junior Cycle*, a number of the *Framework Statements of Learning* and *Key Skills*. The whole school guidance programme is linked to *Key Skills* such as *Managing Myself*, *Managing Information & Thinking*, *Staying Well*, *Communicating and Working with Others*. The guidance counsellor, the Student Enrichment Officer and the Wellbeing Coordinator all have a role in planning, coordinating and delivering guidance-related-learning associated (*Guidance for All*) with the relevant *Key Skills* and in providing more intensive interventions to those students who need it through *Guidance for Some and A Few* approaches.

Wellbeing - SPHE and guidance related learning are two of the main pillars of Wellbeing. Wellbeing is linked to the *Staying Well* key skill of the *Framework for Junior Cycle*. The eight competences can be linked with five of the six indicators of Wellbeing – *Responsible*, *Connected*, *Resilient*, *Respected* and *Aware*. The guidance counsellor has an important role in supporting planning for and delivery of the learning outcomes associated with Wellbeing indicators.

Senior Cycle - At senior cycle (including 6th Year, 5th year & TY) the RE/RSE/Wellbeing curriculum and Guidance Programmes can be used to plan learning outcomes in *Developing Myself* for students. All school staff involved in these programmes work together to ensure a consistent approach is taken in supporting student achievement of the learning outcomes. This collaboration also helps to minimise any repetition/overlap in the provision of teaching and learning experiences in this area.

2.3 Whole School Overview

Within Loreto College, Guidance is structured to provide a range of learning experiences in a developmental sequence, designed to assist students to make choices about their lives and to make transitions based on these choices. These choices may be categorised into three separate but interlinked dimensions/areas:

- A. Personal and Social Development
- B. Educational Guidance
- C. Career Development

Personal and Social Development - Personal and Social development is largely delivered through the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Programme where it is timetabled at Junior Cycle. In Senior Cycle it is delivered through R.E. RSE and Wellbeing. It comprises the following modules: Belonging and Integrating, Self-Management, Communication Skills, Physical Health, Friendship, Relationships and Sexuality, Emotional Health, Influences and Decisions, Substance Use and Personal Safety. The Student Support team includes modules during the course of a school year e.g. Stress Management, Internet Safety, Anti-Bullying and numerous outside speakers. First years have a buddy system where they are paired with a 6th year student to help them with their transition. Every opportunity is used in Loreto College to develop the skills, potential and resilience of students.

B. Educational Guidance - Educational Guidance is developmental in nature and allows the student take responsibility for their own learning and progress. In Loreto College Educational Guidance begins at the students' entry in 1st year by empowering students in the area of subject choice. Later there is another key transition point in TY where subject choices are made for senior cycle. Other areas of guidance include subject level selection, motivation and learning, study skills and examination skills, learning related problems and counselling for these learning difficulties, teacher consultations, psychometric testing and consulting parents about related matters.

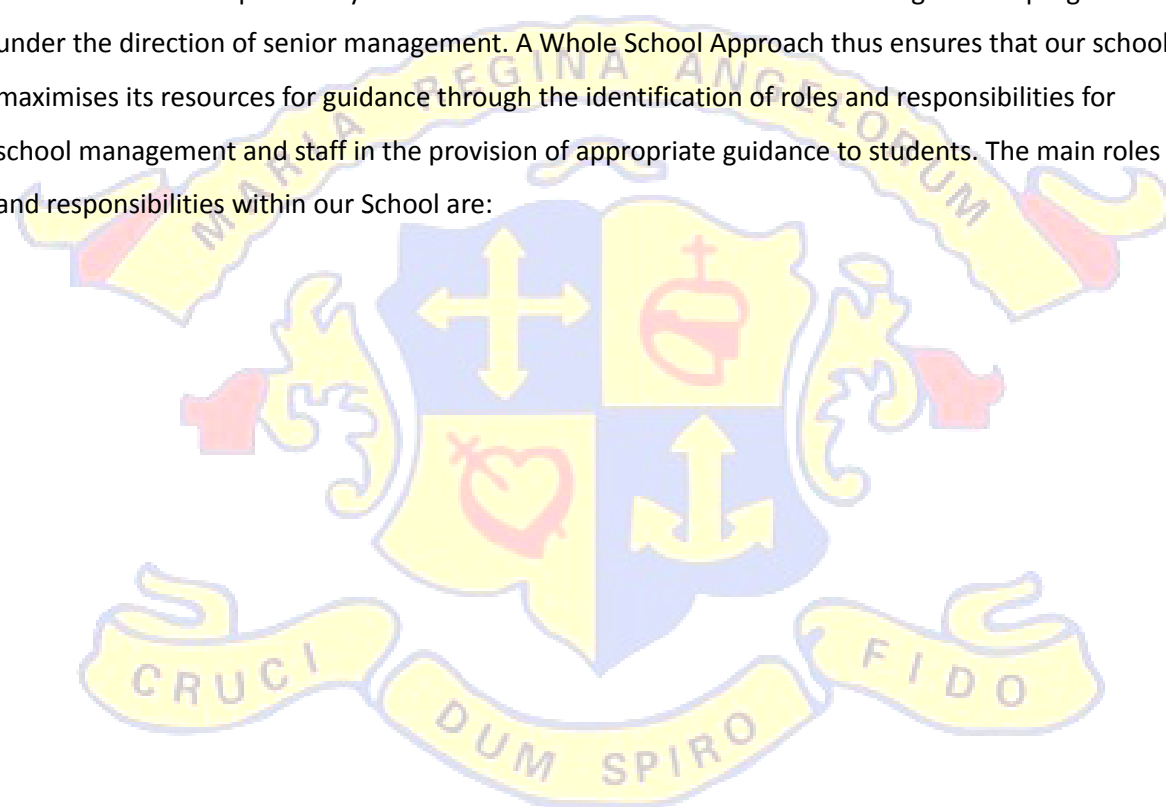
C. Career Guidance – Career development and investigation is vocational in nature and is mainly concentrated at senior cycle. It involves empowering students to recognise their talents and abilities so as to enable them to make informed choices and take responsibility for their own futures. Career development includes areas such as development of self-awareness, employment opportunities, employment rights and duties, personal vocational guidance interviews, organisation of career talks, career research and career / course information, decision and planning skills, use of ICT e.g. Qualifax, vocational education and training, further education and job opportunities. A strong emphasis in the

final year of School is also directed to pathways of further education including third level course/career progression with CAO, UCAS, Eunicas, PLC and apprentice applications to the fore.

3. Guidance: A Whole School Activity – Roles and Responsibilities

Guidance is not provided exclusively by any one individual or group. It is a holistic process that benefits from the synergy of many working together with a shared vision towards a common goal. Whole School Guidance Planning enables our school to identify, prioritise and respond to the guidance needs of students using the resources available. When one considers the three dimensions of guidance (personal, educational and career), all members of the teaching staff are in some way involved in providing guidance to students.

However it is the responsibility of the Guidance Counsellor to coordinate the guidance programme under the direction of senior management. A Whole School Approach thus ensures that our school maximises its resources for guidance through the identification of roles and responsibilities for school management and staff in the provision of appropriate guidance to students. The main roles and responsibilities within our School are:





(a) Board of Management

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

(b) Senior Management

The Principal controls the internal organisation of the school, and exercises supervision over teaching and non-teaching staff. The Deputy Principal is in charge in the absence of the Principal. In the

absence of the Principal and Deputy Principal the SEO is in charge. The Senior Management team also has a responsibility to ensure that Whole School Guidance is of the highest possible standard. This includes managing the process of guidance planning in cooperation with the guidance counsellor, school staff and other school partners such as parents.

(C) Guidance Counsellor

Guidance counsellors because of their specialist training have a professional role in each of the main areas of guidance: personal and social, educational, and career. Within personal and social their role for example may involve publicising to the students and at parents' meetings the work of the Guidance Counsellor and the Guidance Counsellor's availability to individual students for an appointment at any time (within the framework of guidance hours available). Their educational role involves many aspects such as assisting the SEN co-ordinator in assessing incoming students prior to the student's entry to the school or liaising with management, year heads, and class teachers, subject teachers etc. concerning pupils who require intervention or offering those pupils counselling with regard to study techniques, educational planning and personal organisation. Their career role may involve addressing all students in 3rd Year and Transition Year prior to them choosing their subjects for the Leaving Certificate. The Guidance Counsellor will also address a meeting of parents on the same topic. In addition the guidance counsellor has a key role in collaborating with school management in the development and review of the school Guidance plan and the integration of guidance into the curriculum.

The Guidance Counsellor works collaboratively with all staff members and management. They meet regularly with the principal, deputy principal and chaplain. The guidance counsellor has strong links with outside supportive agencies and is a member of the pastoral care and critical incident teams. The Guidance counsellor is involved in testing pupils, and assists in the accommodation of pupils with learning difficulties at examination time. They are on the core planning team for the T.Y. programme.

The Guidance Counsellor and Chaplain as mandated persons are also well positioned, due to the nature of their work, to react to any child protection concerns.

(D) Chaplain

The Chaplain collaborates with all members of the school community and in particular with those who hold designated pastoral responsibilities relating to students, staff and members of the wider community connected with the school. The Chaplain meets regularly with the Guidance counsellor, Principal and Deputy Principal. The Chaplain actively engages with year heads and all members of the Pastoral Care Team and outside supportive agencies. They are a member of the Student Support Team and Critical Incident Team. The chaplain manages the referrals to the external counsellor and

liaises with the individual students and their parents. The Chaplain has a specific mission toward the spiritual, pastoral care and faith development of the entire school community.

(E) Student Support Team

The Pastoral Care Team is made up of Management, Chaplain, Guidance Counsellor, SEN Coordinator and other representatives from the staff body. The Team meets regularly to review the needs of students. The Team strives to provide a response to students' needs by liaising with the SPHE and RE teachers and by inviting outside agencies to cover specific issues. This is a forum for sharing information and concerns in a safe and confidential setting. What is discussed at Student Support Team Meetings relating to individual cases is confidential to the team and any follow up required is decided upon and assigned to a member of the team.

(F) AEN Coordinator

The AEN Coordinator directs the provision and application of resources for students with special educational needs and/or specific learning difficulties. They liaise with Senior Management and all staff, parents/guardians and outside agencies. They apply for resources including resource hours, special needs assistants and assistive technology. The management team oversees timetables for students requiring learning support and assistance. The AEN coordinator and Deputy Principal liaise with special needs assistants, Guidance counsellor, Chaplain, Year heads, subject teachers and Principal.

(G) Subject teachers

Subject teachers have a final line role of responsibility for the education of all students in their classes. The subject teacher is the key in helping students to achieve their full potential and assists in identifying students and giving support. Subject teachers have a key role in providing support to students and information and advice relating to their subject disciplines and related careers. Some teachers have additional formal responsibilities through management, pastoral care roles, co-ordination roles and through participation in programmes such as SPHE. Individual teachers may be sought out by students on an informal basis for advice and information. All teachers may consult with the guidance counsellor on the needs of an individual student and/or refer the student to the guidance counsellor/ LS/SEN Coordinator when specialist competence is required with due regard to confidentiality.

(H) Other Support Staff

- **Class Teacher**

The class teacher takes a particular interest in the activities and progress of the students in a class group, and helps the students to be positive in their behaviour and work. In addition, the class

teacher serves as a special link between the school administration and the students, and co-operates with the year head in ensuring the students observance of the school rules.

- **Year Head**

The Year Head has general responsibility for the welfare of a year group. The year head oversees the student's attendance, punctuality, academic performance and behaviour and liaises with the parents/guardians of the year group. The Year Head works closely with the subject teachers, class teachers, Guidance counsellor, Chaplain, Deputy Principal and Principal. The Year Head also links with outside agencies in conjunction with the above.

(J) Guest Speakers

Guest Speakers are engaged by School personnel to support the three dimensions/areas of Guidance. Guest speakers are designed to bring their own unique experience, knowledge, expertise to the student, staff and parental body. Guest Speakers work in conjunction with existing school programmes/subjects/areas of Guidance so as to augment and support existing provision.

(K) Parents

This plan adopts the legal definition of parent as set down in the Education Act, 1998. The Plan recognizes that parents play a pivotal role in developing, promoting and supporting the growth of their child both at home and within the school. Parents play a vital role in shaping their children's attitude to school. A supportive home environment shapes attitudes that promote the holistic development of the child. It is important that parents are aware of and support this plan together with other school policies and procedures. Parents are further encouraged to involve themselves in positive participation in school life in order to facilitate the development of mutual and beneficial links between school and home. The Parents' Association, too, in hosting seminars builds the personal capacity of parents. Parents can also participate in the guidance process through: (i) Consultation with the guidance counsellor and other school staff. (ii) Attendance at relevant information and other meetings at school. (iii) Contributing to the development and review of the school guidance plan. And when possible (iv) Providing personal assistance to the school guidance programme.

(L) Students

This plan seeks to attend to the welfare of every student and their right to participate in and benefit from education. It helps students to focus on their personal responsibility for their own behaviour and to experience the value of being a responsible and participatory member of Loreto College. Students have an important part to play in creating and sustaining a positive atmosphere of mutual trust and respect that nurtures teaching and learning. The Student Council affords students an

opportunity to voice their opinion and become involved in the daily life of their School. Wellbeing, SPHE, RE and CSPE cover many aspects of Personal and Social Development. Here, students develop an awareness of their own needs and difficulties and come to know how to ask and who to ask for advice and help. Because Loreto College adopts a whole-school approach to Guidance students are free to approach any member of staff with their concerns. Accordingly, a student may talk to a subject teacher, class teacher, year head, guidance counsellor, chaplain, deputy principal and principal as they see fit. Fellow students also have a part to play in supporting their peers in difficulty.

4. Current Whole School Guidance Programme & Provision

4.1 Time allocation –

Individual, small group and class group support Guidance and Counselling support is offered on an individual, small group or class group basis. The focus of counselling is on the personal/social, educational, and career issues, individually, in small groups or as part of timetabled class contact. The School counselling service provides a caring context for counselling, engages in advocacy where appropriate and supports young people in personal crises.

Individual Counselling is an interactive process to help the student to understand their personal reality in a safe, supportive environment and help them deal responsibly with their needs.

Group work is offered under the direction of the Counsellor or chaplain. Depending on the context and the group this can be the most effective form of support for individual members, where students can learn that they are not alone in their experience and receive healing from one another. All group work will only take place where there is proper supervision and permission.

Class group support is timetabled in nature under the supervision of the Guidance Counsellor and by the allocation of the Principal. The Guidance Counsellor is at all times sensitive to the developmental stages of the students.

4.2 Delivery of Guidance & Counselling (one-to-one, small group etc.)

The 2017 and 2018 Allocation Circulars state –

“The Minister requires schools to adjust their Guidance Plans to meet Action 9.1 in Action Plan for Education 2017, which states that the Guidance Plan should “include specified time allocation for guidance counsellors to be available for one-to-one guidance counselling and time allocation for the role in supporting the organisation and work of the Student Support Team”

While guidance is a whole-school activity, the central and critical role of the Guidance Counsellor is vital, particularly for the availability for one to one guidance and counselling. The latest model places responsibility on school leaders to use the guidance provision for the maximum benefit of students).

Guidance at Junior Cycle in Loreto College is linked to SPHE and/or Ethical & Spiritual Wellbeing. TY have a dedicated weekly guidance class. While senior cycle guidance is modular.

4.3 Junior and Senior Cycles Guidance Programme

The School vision is to supply an effective and comprehensive Guidance service which enables our students and their parents to acquire knowledge and develop competencies for future careers, to broaden their horizons and to strive to be successful on their pathways in life. The programme aims to address the needs of all students within the school community. The Whole School delivery in Guidance provision at Loreto College is best identified by the summarised charts in Appendix 2:

5 Other Considerations

5.1 School Structure

The student population of Loreto College is divided into classes of mixed ability. Each class group has a Class Teacher who has a pastoral role and takes particular care of their class. They look after their personal, social, health, welfare and monitor student journals at regular intervals.

A Year Head is also assigned to each year group. The Year Head looks after the welfare of their relevant year group and remains in constant contact with their Class Teacher as well as parents throughout the year. The Year Head also has a disciplinary role within the School structure. Weekly Year Head meetings allow coordination with School management.

The Guidance department recognises the importance of this system in our school and fosters a cooperative relationship with School Management, Year Heads and Class Teachers in order to best meet our student's needs.

5.2 Appointments

Students requiring assistance, advice or support can approach any staff member at any time. A staff member may have formal classes and so may be unable to consult with the student immediately. If this is the case a follow up appointment will be made. Students who have an appointment through the School Counselling Service for personal or career counselling must email their class teacher for that time, they will also have their presence indicated with a note on VSWare. The student must provide their relevant teacher an email before attending their appointment. Students are advised to maximise their 1 on 1 time for career advice as multiple visits are not guaranteed. However follow up appointments may be necessary and will be organised. Parents/Guardians make appointments with all staff members (including the Guidance Counsellor, Chaplain etc.) by

telephoning the school office. Appointments are conducted during the school day where possible. All parties are requested to inform each other if a cancellation is necessary. On occasion, a staff member may request another staff member e.g. Year Head, subject teacher or/and management to be present at a meeting. Notes may be made and kept at meetings.

5.3 Confidentiality

A professional relationship involving confidentiality is at the core of the Counselling Service in Loreto College. The Counsellor will take reasonable care to ensure that consultations with students, parents and other professionals will take place in an appropriately private environment, especially in one-to-one consultations. Confidentiality for students must be respected unless there is clear and immediate danger to the student or to others. Hence, confidentiality of the student will be respected provided it is in the best interest of the student and that no other party will be endangered by it and all legal requirements are met. However, confidentiality will not be guaranteed in the following circumstances:

- when a student poses a danger to themselves or others; (see separate Self Harm Policy)
- when a student discloses an intention to commit a crime;
- when the counsellor suspects abuse or neglect;
- when a court orders a counsellor to make records available;
- in the case of abuse (Child Protection Guidelines definition applies here)

All students are informed of the protocols surrounding confidentiality at their first meeting or prior to their first meeting. Written and Oral reports will contain only such data as are pertinent to the case, and every effort will be made to avoid undue invasion of the student's privacy. Primarily School Management (Designated Liaison Person) and/or Parents are informed if the student is posing a danger to him/ herself and / or to others.

The School in its duty of care adheres to the procedures as outlined in "Children First" (National Guidelines for the protection and Welfare of Children/ HSE) and "Child Protection Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools" (Department of Education and Science) and in accordance with Loreto College's Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment.

The Child Protection Guidelines for Post Primary schools state in 4. 1. 1. and 4. 2. 1.:

4. 1. 1. If a member of staff receives an allegation or has a suspicion that a child may have been abused, or is being abused, or is at risk of abuse he/she should, without delay, report the matter to the Designated Liaison Person (Mr Richard Prendiville) in that school. A written record of the report should be made and placed in a secure location by the Principal. The need for confidentiality should be borne in mind at all times. The support of the school should continue to be made available to the child.

4. 2. 1. If the Principal is satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for the suspicion or allegation he/she should report the matter to the relevant health board immediately.

5.4 Ethical considerations and Accountability

The Guidance Counsellor is constantly aware of his responsibility to the student, to the school, to his own profession, to himself and to the implementation of this policy. The Guidance Counsellor will take part in professional peer supervision, which will provide support and feedback for their professional welfare. The Guidance Counsellors also abide by the Institute of Guidance Counsellor's Code of Ethics. Equally all School personnel abide by the 'Child Protection Guidelines for Post Primary Schools' and 'Children First, National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children'.

The Schools Guidance Counselling service is subject to all relevant legal requirements, to the provisions of the 1998 Education Act, to DES directives and circulars, to the school's ethos and the direction of the Board of Management. 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.

5.5 Reporting and Referral Procedures

- **Reporting** - In both personal counselling and in Careers Guidance Interviews the confidentiality rule is followed i.e. school management and parents/guardians are informed if it is felt that the student is a danger to 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, this is only done with the knowledge and ideally the agreement of the student. I

- **Referral** - Assistance for students will be sought from other qualified professionals outside the school, for areas of concern such as learning difficulties, substance abuse, bereavement, where appropriate School personnel considers necessary and appropriate. The Chaplain and Guidance Counsellor will supply all relevant information and seek the relevant permission from school authorities and parents or guardians. Teachers, school management and parents may refer students to the Guidance Counsellor and/or Chaplain. Clear procedures of referral (below), which have been agreed between the Principal, Staff, Parents and the Guidance Counsellor will be followed. Some strategies that can be used include – Informing parents, staff and students as to the procedures for student referral both inside and outside the school.

5.6 Record-Keeping Procedures

Record keeping is an integral part of the administration of the Guidance and Counselling Service in Loreto College. All records will be kept in accordance with the 'Freedom of Information Act' and the School Data Protection Policy.

Appropriate coding of information will take place to protect clients. Recording information that could lead to misinterpretation and misuse is avoided as well as any form of conjecture. The Principal will be made aware of the location of sensitive and confidential files. Such records will be maintained in secure locations.

Record keeping involves:

- o Keeping student records for a minimum of 7 years.
- o The detailed records of personal counselling sessions should contain some of the actual words and phrases used by the client.
- o To ensure accuracy the Counsellor should try to write up notes as soon as possible after the session.
- o Keeping notes as brief as possible.
- o Only facts are collected not opinions

5.7 Other Agencies

The School may enlist the help, support, advice and assistance of the following agencies and organisations as appropriate:

- NEPS Psychological Services
- Social Workers
- Doctors
- Employers
- SENO
- Túsla
- Colleges/Admission Officers and Access Officers
- Solas
- Defence Forces
- Gardaí
- Department of Education (RACE)
- State Examinations Commission (SEC)
- CAO, PLC, "HEAR" "DARE" and UCAS
- CAMHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services



5.8 Testing and Assessment

All our assessment procedures will be dictated by the above principles and a variety of procedures will be used to assist students, parents and teachers for a variety of purposes, for example, academic performance, categorisation of occupational interests, student tracking, educational and career planning, personal and social development. School assessment and public examination results will supplement this information.

The Guidance Counsellor with the aid of the above information will be better equipped to assist the student in decision making, problem solving, tracking and with developing skills for coping with ever changing circumstances. Some of the assessments used in Loreto College include:

- Interest Assessments:

Students conduct interest assessment on careers websites such as www.careersportal.ie and www.qualifax.ie

- CAT4s for Incoming 1st Years and TYs

Cognitive Abilities Test are carried out with incoming 1st years students as means of identifying the student's individual potential, strengths, needs and learning preferences, providing a complete profile of their ability and seek to assist us in facilitating a smooth transition from primary to post primary school for the individual students. The use of CAT's help to inform target-setting, the development of individual learning plans and aids the implementation of more timely intervention strategies, while providing a sound basis for comparisons over time. CAT4s for TYs assist with subject choice for the Leaving Cert and to help pinpoint students who will need help at senior cycle.

The Inspectorate's *Looking at Guidance* (2009) stresses the 'vital role' that guidance counsellors play in ensuring that 'good assessment and test information is available to inform decisions about students' learning and about the choices and decisions that they and others make about their lives'.

5.9 Bereavement Support

The Principal, Deputy Principal, Chaplain, Guidance Counsellor, Student Support Team, teachers and other staff support students who experience bereavement, separation or loss.

They may carry out some of the following functions, as appropriate:

- o Where we know a bereavement is imminent, if appropriate, support is offered beforehand
- o In conjunction with the Principal, ensure that all teachers are made aware of a bereavement or loss, especially the year-head and class tutor
- o Attend removal and funeral
- o Principal, Chaplain and Year Head will visit the home of the bereaved
- o Meet student on his or her return to school
- o Inform staff if student is having particular difficulties
- o Seek outside help or assistance for a student and his/her family should the need arise
- o Students attendance at funerals
- o The Critical Incident Management Plan guides School procedures in the event of a sudden loss

5.10 Role of Visitors

Visitors are invited to the school to provide information and enhance the quality of the Guidance programme. The teacher remains with the class for the duration of the visit. The Principal must be informed in advance of all visiting speakers and the content of their presentation. Evaluations are carried out to assess the benefits. We follow the Guidelines as outlined by the Department of Education Circular 0023/2010

5.11 Use of ICT in Guidance

Circular 0009/2012 asks schools to consider enabling students to use directly the extensive range of guidance tools available through the internet from relevant websites (e.g. Qualifax, Careers Portal) to maximise 'the use of their available resources for the provision of guidance.' (Section 4.3) Loreto College, through its various and multiple ICT resources, enables such student engagement with ICT and the acquiring of appropriate ICT knowledge and skills.

5.12 CPD

The guidance counsellor keeps abreast of on-going changes in the fields of training, education, work and child welfare. The Board of Management and School Management regularly facilitate the attendance of the guidance counsellor at relevant events and at in-career professional training during the school year. Participation in these events is always related to the objectives of the school guidance programme.

6. Monitoring, review and evaluation

This policy statement will be the basis on which a regular review and evaluation of the Guidance Service will be conducted between the Guidance Counsellor, the Principal and the Board of Management. A comprehensive review of the entire Guidance Service within the context of the Whole School Plan will provide an opportunity for the Guidance Counsellors to give a full report to the Senior Management team in the school, receive feedback on any shortfalls in the service and agree adjustments for the following year(s).

The school guidance plan will undergo constant appraisal by the Guidance Counsellor and will be fully reviewed every 3 years.

7. Guidance Department Goals 2022 - 2025

The following areas are identified as areas for improvement / further development in the Guidance Department in Loreto College:

- Identify students in Transition Year who could become 'Guidance Captains' and help with the running of events etc.
- The Guidance department plans to develop a night for senior cycle students in conjunction with the parents association to have past pupils who are current undergraduates at college, come back to the school and give an outline of their course.
- Create a directory of work experience opportunities for Transition Year students along with the Parents Association.

Other roles in the Guidance Programme

Guidance and Counselling is seen as a whole school concern. Thus, a whole school approach is advocated. This plan acknowledges the important roles played by the following parties within the school community:

- Guidance Counsellor – co-ordinates guidance and counselling activities within the school
- Principal – makes adequate provision for the successful delivery of the school guidance programme and is the designated liaison person for any child protection concerns
- Deputy Principal – supports the work of the Pastoral Care Team, Year Heads, Class Tutors and Subject Teachers
- Chaplaincy – provides support for the student population. This support tends to take place in group settings and is mostly in relation to integration, transition, mental health workshops and talks from outside agencies. The Chaplain also has a whole School spiritual and ethical dimension in their role.
- School Secretary – cares for pupils arriving in the office for various reasons.
- Year Heads – The Guidance Counsellor communicates regularly with year heads. General information regarding particular students is exchanged at these meetings. The Guidance Counsellor keeps the year head informed regarding upcoming guidance talks and events. The year head also liaises and communicates the need for care and compassion of subject teachers should students be experiencing periods of personal crisis.
- Transition Year Coordinator - informs Third Years about Transition Year and coordinates work experience. Along with a core group of teachers important planning decisions are made at regular meetings
- Class Teachers – work with class groups under the general heading of pastoral care. Informal meetings take place between individual class teachers and the Guidance Counsellor. Issues usually relate to concern for individual students - either academic or personal
- AEN Teachers – deals with pupils identified with special academic or behavioural needs and liaises with the Guidance Counsellor as relevant supports are required.
- SPHE Teachers – educate the students by following a curriculum outlined by the DES in the area of social, personal, and health education.
- Subject Teachers – cater to the academic as well as the individual needs of students within their class groups and liaise with the Guidance Counsellor on an ongoing basis regarding educational and personal issues affecting students'
- Parents – play an integral part in the personal, social, as well as the educational and career decisions of school pupils;
- Students – identify their own needs within the guidance programme.

Appendix 2

Summarised charts of Whole School Delivery. (Attached)



