



CBS Thurles

The Guidance Plan

Draft

Mission / Value Statement

An effective School Guidance Plan helps to build a Christian, caring community. Each person is respected as an individual with similarities and differences to others. We endeavour to provide a safe environment at CBS Thurles where the needs of students are identified and every effort is made by staff and by the school to meet these needs.

Everybody has talents and skills and we assist students in identifying these and making effective use of them. Each student in the school is encouraged to fulfil his potential. We recognise that our student population comes from a variety of religious and cultural backgrounds and every effort is made to give them a sense of belonging in the school. The holistic development of each child in our care is of the utmost importance. We will endeavour to create an enjoyable environment where students and staff are proud to be associated with our school.

Mission Statement

To create a Christian, caring community of learning in which each member

- Is encouraged to recognise and develop his/her talents and abilities to the full
- Is respected as a unique human being and
- Enjoys a sense of confidence and belonging.

The mission statement for guidance reflects the values of the school and underpins the development of school policy in the guidance counselling functions. It seeks to emphasise the educational and religious ethos that permeates all aspects of the Christian Brothers community of schools, now part of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust (ERST).

Our School

Our school is an all-boys voluntary secondary day school with a current enrolment of 700 students. The school dates back to 1816 but is on its present site since 1810. The first lay principal was appointed in 2001. The enrolment is a mix of rural and urban children from different socio-economic backgrounds with a wide range of academic abilities

There are 42 permanent teaching staff with a further 4 teachers working in a part-time or temporary capacity. About 85% of students go on to further education and the others go straight to the workplace.

Definition

Guidance is defined as the process of facilitating individuals or groups at any point throughout their lives to develop their capacity for the self-management of their personal, social, educational, training, occupational and life choices in order to grow towards their potential and thereby to contribute to the development of a better society.

Overall Aims of the Guidance Programme

Educational

- To help achieve the ideals of the school's Mission Statement.
- To encourage students to participate fully in school and to maximise the educational opportunities and resources available to them.
- To inform students of the problems associated with early school leaving and to help them understand the consequences of a limited education.
- To help students identify their most effective learning style and develop appropriate study and exam skills.
- To help students make effective choices and to cope with the demands that school and society places on them.
- To promote inclusion of special needs students, racial, ethnic and intellectual differences.

Vocational

- To promote career education as part of the overall educational programme on offer.
- To provide objective assessment student aptitudes and interests and provide feedback on these.
- To help each student realise his talents and abilities.
- To identify the areas of work that are related to these talents, aptitudes and abilities.
- To help students in their exploration of career progression routes and lifelong learning opportunities.
- To provide clear information on subject choice.
- To outline to students the implications of subject choice in terms of further education training and career options.
- To develop information-seeking skills for career exploration and planning, using Internet and other ICT.

Personal Development

- To help each student to develop to his full potential, emotionally, spiritually, physically and socially.
- To encourage the development of a positive self-image.
- To encourage a confident and caring person.
- To promote the development of appropriate skills in interacting with others and in dealing with the problems they may encounter.
- To develop a personal Career Action Plan based on their academic and other achievements, aptitudes, interests and circumstances.
- To encourage participation and involvement in the school as a community and to contribute to life in the wider community.

The Specific Responsibility of the Guidance Counsellor

The following section describes the roles that are specific to the Guidance Counsellor (GC).

Counselling

The GC draws on his/her skills and experience, to help pupils in their decision-making, problem-solving and behaviour. Counselling is offered on an individual or small group basis. The focus of counselling may be on personal, educational and career issues, individually or in combination.

The GC provides a caring context for counselling young people in personal crisis.

Consultation

The GC engages with parents, teachers, school management and referral agencies. Consultation may include interventions by the GC on behalf of a pupil.

Assessment

The GC uses a range of psychological tests for prediction of academic performance, categorisation of occupational interests, assessment of behaviour, educational and career planning, personal and social development. Information from these tests is supplemented other records on the student that are held in the school.

State examination results (Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate) and Mock Examination results enable the GC to assist a pupil in decision-making.

Information

The GC helps pupils to identify sources of relevant information to assist them in decision-making.

Classroom Guidance Activities

Classroom guidance activities fall into two main categories:

1. Skills development to assist decision-making, CV preparation & job search, Career investigations, mock interviews, preparation for work placements and study skills.
2. Information giving e.g. understanding CAO, the points system, the national qualifications framework, education, training and employment, opportunity awareness and pathways.

Counselling Aims

All students will have access to individual or group counselling, on request or by referral. Counselling will focus on the domains of educational, personal/ social and career growth and development. Our service will try to balance prevention (developmental) counselling and intervention counselling. Counselling is most effective when integrated into a school climate, which encourages respect, trust, caring consideration and support for all- a climate that we believe exists in our school and is underpinned by the ethos and philosophy of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust (ERST), our trustees. Special consideration must be given to students with special needs or different cultural backgrounds.

The GC endeavours to meet anticipated developmental needs before they occur and present proactive programmes in groups. The GC is an advocate for the child and he/ she will provide a caring environment for young people in crisis.

In summary, we aim to:

1. To encourage responsible and rational behaviour in all our students.
2. To assist students in their decision-making.
3. To develop coping skills in our students.
4. To help our students to become responsible members of society.

Open Days

Purpose: Open days are an integral part of the Careers Research. They give the students the opportunity to view the college campus and facilities and to get first hand information on the courses of interest to them. Students need to be selective in the Open Days they attend to avoid time wasting and avoid missing classes.

Preparation is most important in order to get maximum benefit from the Open Day. Students need to be focused on what careers they are interested in and the relevant college courses available. Students are advised to study college prospectus in advance and prepare a number of questions.

Students must wear full school uniform and obey the Code of Conduct while on such trips. The G.C. will organize transport where appropriate.

On their return students should write a report on their visit, talks they attended, what they learned, and answers to their questions.

Information Night for Parents on Career Options

In the Spring each year a meeting is organised for parents of 3rd Years and TYO to familiarise them on the subject options and curricular programmes available to their sons. The guidance counsellor and the coordinators of TYO and LCVP provide input. Simultaneously, the options are discussed with the students during school time.

Guidance offered to Student Groups

(A) Incoming First Years – Pre-Entry

Aims

1. To make transition from Primary to Secondary school as easy and stress free as possible.
2. To help students in their choice of schools and to get as much background information as is necessary and appropriate.

Strategies

First Years

The Year Head and Guidance Counsellor will interview all First Years after 6 – 8 weeks and identify needs, offer advice on subject choice after sampling optional subjects.

All students needing resource hours or “at-risk” would hopefully be identified, if not already identified at pre-entry and assessment stage.

Areas of importance that are dealt with by the GC and the SPHE teachers are:

- Coping with the transition from primary to secondary school.
- Making friends.
- Identifying support structures in the school and the community.
- Anti-bullying.
- Study skills and homework.
- School rules and discipline.

- Subject choice.

Second Years

The Year Head and Class Teachers arrange a means of regular contact with students to offer advice on discipline and coping with school.

Information and advice would also be offered on subject levels, dropping to Ordinary or Foundation levels etc.

Many aspects of guidance are covered in the SPHE programme. These include:

- Study and motivation, including study skills.
- Self-discipline and time management.
- Interpersonal relationships.
- Decision-making skills.
- The world of work.

Third Years

The following areas of general guidance are dealt with in 3rd Year:

- Study Skills and Exam Technique
- Career Interest Inventory
- Differential Aptitude Tests
- Information and advice on subject levels, dropping to Ordinary or Foundation levels
- Subject Choice: Input from Guidance Counsellor to Students
- Subject Teachers
- Information Night for Parents
- Information on T.Y.O. and L.C.V.P.

Transition Year

The coordinator of Transition Year organises the work experience for the TY students.

Preparation for the world of work and the subsequent briefing and debriefing is also carried out by the coordinator

Between the GC and the coordinator the following areas are covered:

- Research and career investigation
- Interest Inventory
- Projects
- Work Experience
- Preparation for Subject Choice

Fifth Years

- Study Skills
- Levels: Higher V. Ordinary
- Emphasis on career research
- Interest Inventory
- Career Investigations
- CV preparation and application forms.
- Use of Internet and online portals/websites
- H-PAT Ireland awareness
- QualifaX
- Work Experience
- Meet students individually
- Open Days (UCD, I.T. Carlow & Waterford, U.L)

Sixth Years

- Levels: Higher V. Ordinary
- Careers :
- Meet individually
- Programme: How to plan, Interest Inventory, Aptitude tests, etc
- CAO application system
- UCAS applications
- Open Days
- Job Applications
- Interviews
- Organise Career Information Nights (CAO & CAS)
- Attend Open Days
- PLC courses
- Talk to Parents re Options, Third Level, CAO etc.

Services Available to all Students

- Individual Counselling
- Referrals to Psychologist
- Pastoral Care: Class teachers/all teachers
- Parent teacher meetings
- Meeting of parents (invitation) by principal, deputy principal, teachers
- Care Tea

Guidance and Vocational Preparation

Vocational preparation involves planning and organising workplace learning. Schools need to make provision based on work simulating learning experiences relevant to the personal and social, educational and career learning objectives of the school guidance programme. Such experiences include work experience, work shadowing, visits to the work place, training centres and higher education institutes etc.

The following curricular programmes address guidance:

- SPHE
- CSPE
- RSE
- TYO
- LCVP

Evaluation of Guidance

Positive Aspects

- The focus of the Transition Year Programme is on developing life skills, rather than academic development.
- Subject choice for senior cycle is well organised, but increased numbers going into 5th Year is putting pressure on existing system – how can limits be imposed based on existing resources? The guidance counsellor organises a seminar for prospective senior students at which teachers of the various subjects give a short presentation outlining the content of the subject, the aptitude required and the career options available from studying the subject. A booklet summarising all the information is given to the students for discussion with the families. The GC also gives a presentation to parents.
- The optional programmes, such as Transition Year and Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme, are explained to students and their parents by the guidance counsellor and the programme coordinators.

- Meaningful study skills seminars are organised for all 3rd and 6th Year students.
- Mock interviews for LCVP students work well, as shown by feedback but a higher level of participation would be desirable.
- Most of the GC's time is spent with senior students, particularly 6th Years.

Areas for Improvement

- SPHE requires greater coordination
- CSPE, SPHE/RSE classes are still 25+ students and it very difficult to teach the subject effectively to classes with big numbers
- Formal study skills programmes for 2nd and 5th year students would be beneficial, although these skills are dealt with as part of SPHE in 2nd Year.
- The school needs to examine the introduction of a reduced curriculum for students who are unable to cope with the full load at JC.

Reviewed by Board in October 2016