



## CBS Secondary School, Dungarvan

### Scoil na mBráithre Guidance Plan - 2021/2022

#### **Introduction**

The Dungarvan CBS is a secondary school in the coastal town of Dungarvan. It was founded in 1807 and is the second oldest Christian Brothers school in the world. The current student population is 369. We cater for all ranges of abilities, embrace all social groupings and religious persuasions.

The Guidance Plan is student centred in its approach. The promotion of enhancement, self-esteem, life skills and the development of our students full potential leading to greater personal autonomy 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 Guidance Programme. 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 and also with assistance from the School Care Team and the Special Educational Needs department. Finally, the plan forms part of the Whole School Plan - it will be revised on a yearly basis to ensure its nature and content are kept current for the student population of that time.

#### **Rationale**

The Education Act of 1998 describes Guidance as a universal entitlement for all post primary school students. The act requires schools to provide students with '*appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices*' and to prepare a Guidance Plan. Circular 0009/2012 states that *each school develops collaboratively a school guidance plan as a means of supporting the needs of its students.*

This plan has evolved to give a formal structure to a whole school approach to this provision. It also informs parents, students, teachers and other interested parties that guidance and pastoral care will be delivered in an integrated and structured way. 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. This allows for management and staff to contribute in a positive manner as guidance is seen as a whole school concern.

#### **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’
- ✚ 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
- ✚ Planning the School Guidance Programme National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE),2004, “Looking at Guidance, Teaching and Learning in Post-Primary Schools” Inspectorate Department of Education and Skills, 2009
- ✚ IGC Code of Ethics (2007)
- ✚ 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.’
- ✚ *Circular Letter 0010/2017 Approved Allocation of Teaching Posts 2017/18 School Year (DES, 2017a)*. This provides a separate guidance allocation to schools by reducing the Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR). Since 2016 Guidance has been gradually restored by way of a change to the PTR. In CBS Secondary School guidance provision has similarly been restored gradually in that time.
- ✚ Circular 0010/2017: ‘Voluntary Secondary Schools Approved Allocation of Teaching Posts 2017/18. *“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”*
- ✚ *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 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.
- ✚ Circulars 0007/2018, 0079/2018 and 0012/2019 “Second Level Schools Approved Allocation of Teaching Posts 2018/19

- ✚ Framework for Considering Provision of Guidance in Post-Primary Schools 2012 (Issued by ACCS, IVEA, JMB and NAPD)
- ✚ [http://www.ncge.ie/uploads/Guidance\\_Framework\\_document\\_May\\_1st\\_2012.pdf](http://www.ncge.ie/uploads/Guidance_Framework_document_May_1st_2012.pdf) 2013
- ✚ Wellbeing Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools <https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Resources/Guidance/Well-Being-in-Post-Primary-Schools-Guidelines-for-Mental-Health-Promotion-and-Suicide-Prevention-2013.pdf>

## **Relationship to our Mission Statement & Scoil na mBráithre Values**

Scoil na mBráithre is a Catholic School of Edmund Rice. We aspire to nurture the individual student to allow them to develop to their 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. We expect high standards in all that we do at CBS Dungarvan. We encourage our students to aim high in their studies, to work hard and to be sensitive to the rights and needs of others.

We promote a healthy work ethic and a love of learning in a spirit of collegiality and co-operation so that all may reach their full potential. The ethos of the School is one of equality and inclusiveness, welcoming and nurturing all of the diverse abilities and talents of the various communities we serve within a positive and caring Christian ethos.

## **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 ~~document~~ involves a variety of approaches such as feedback from inspection reports, parental and student attitudinal surveys or via other initiatives like student council. 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.

### **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.

The objectives of this plan are to enable students to;

- ✚ develop an awareness and acceptance of their talents and abilities
- ✚ identify and explore the opportunities available to them and to clarify educational, social and career goals
- ✚ make informed choices about their lives and follow through on these choices
- ✚ grow in independence and take responsibility for themselves
- ✚ address personal issues
- ✚ support the development of every student
- ✚ acknowledge and support each person's role in the school community
- ✚ provide an environment where students can have an active and responsible role
- ✚ to nurture teaching and learning so that each individual can reach their full potential
- ✚ to monitor the well-being of all students
- ✚ apply best practise in the protection of students and promotion of their welfare in accordance with DES guidelines and the School Child Protection Policy
- ✚ work effectively with statutory authorities and outside agencies when required
- ✚ 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 current Children First Guidelines and Child Protection requirements.

## **Scope**

The Guidance Plan applies to all aspects of school life and therefore involves the whole school community. Its interventions and supports apply to juniors, seniors, minority, special educational, guidance and personal needs of all students as they progress through their second level education. Scoil na mBráithre is an all-boys learning environment which is part of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust. The guidance office is located on the second floor of the old building. The office is equipped with a computer, telephone, printer and college/apprenticeship/PLC prospectuses.

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
- ✚ Vocational 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.

## **Related Policies and Documents**

The Guidance Plan is consistent with school policies and plans already in place. It may be read in conjunction with the following:

- ✚ Anti-Bullying Policy
- ✚ Bullying Investigation
- ✚ Critical Incident Management Plan
- ✚ Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017 – DES
- ✚ Child Safeguarding and Risk Assessment Oct 2020
- ✚ Religious Education Policy
- ✚ RSE Policy

## **Guidance and Pastoral Care Provision**

**Guidance** at second-level refers to a range of learning experiences provided in a developmental sequence to assist students make effective choices in their lives and to navigate the transitions from one life phase to the next. It encompasses the following three separate but interlinked areas:

**Counselling** is a key part of the programme and is offered on an individual or group basis, as part of a developmental learning process and at moments of personal crisis,

**Guidance and Counselling** include three distinct but interlinked areas:

1. Personal and Social Development
2. Educational Guidance
3. Career Development

- 1. Personal and Social Development** is delivered through the Social Personal and Health (SPHE) and our wellbeing programme at Junior and Senior level. The senior programme is delivered through Religious Education and Relationships and Sexuality Education. Tutors, Year Heads, Subject teachers, Management, Learning Support and Guidance Counsellors co-operate closely in this aspect of Guidance. The transition from Primary to Secondary school is given special attention.
- 2. Educational Guidance** is delivered in an integrated and collaborative way involving subject teachers, class teachers, year heads, management and the Learning Support Department This includes the following areas:  
Organisational skills; Motivation and Goal Setting; Homework and Study Skills; Exam Preparation; Under Performance; Subject choices, changes and levels; Psychometric Testing and Identification of students with special needs.
- 3. Career Development**, this is principally the role of the Guidance Counsellor but also involves Management, Subject Teachers, Parents, and outside agencies. Details are included in the Guidance Programme section.

## **Roles & 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. This may be in morning assembly, informally through supervision and substitution, advice given in homework club or class, lunchtime activities to stimulate personal and social growth, classroom interactions, general advice relating to the standards required of students, parent-teacher-student meetings, phone

calls home, reports home, etc.

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 Voluntary Secondary Schools. Each school is required to comply with the Education Act (1998) and provide students with "access to appropriate guidance".

**(b) Senior Management**

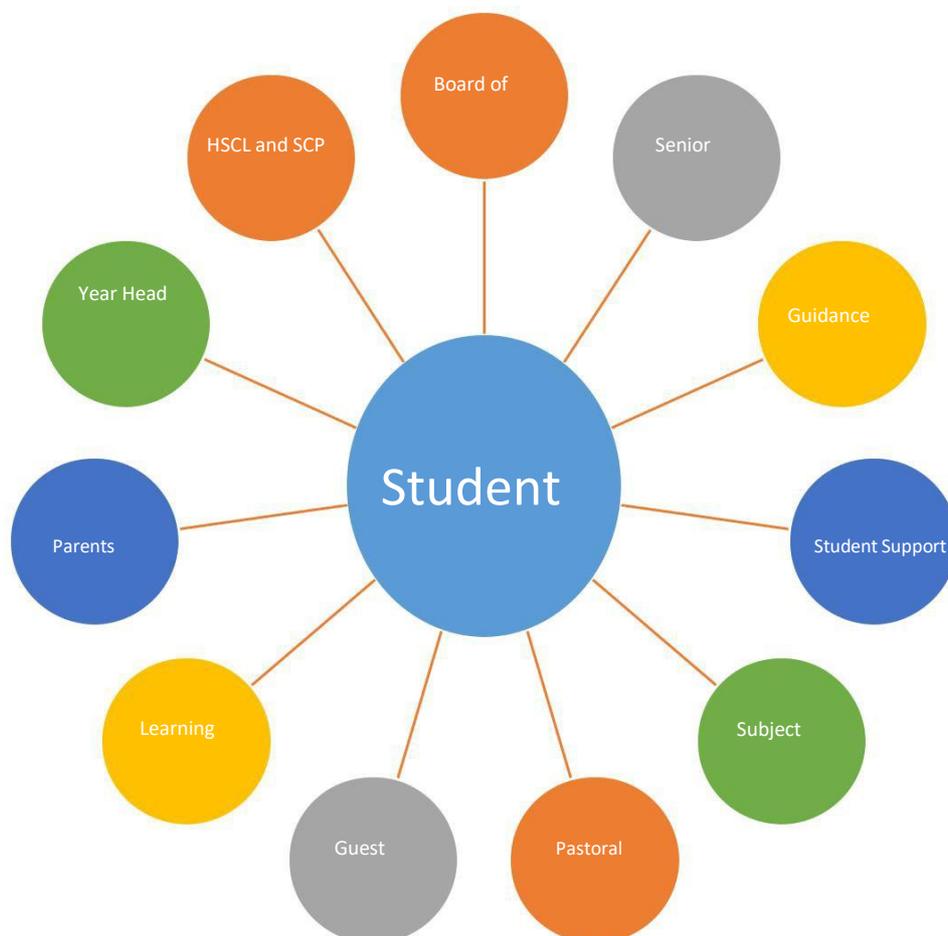
The Principal controls the internal organization and management of the school, and exercises supervision over the teaching and non-teaching staff. The Deputy Principal is in charge of the school in the absence of the Principal. In the absence of the Principal and Deputy Principal, an Assistant Principal is placed in charge of the school. 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 counselors, 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 induction of first years, assisting the SEN co-ordinator in assessing incoming students prior to the student's entry to the school or liaising with management, yearheads, 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 additional support staff. The guidance counsellor has strong links with outside supportive agencies and is a member of the SST and critical incident teams. The Guidance Counsellor as a mandated person is also well positioned, due to the nature of their work, to react to any child protection concerns.



## The Care Team

The Pastoral Care team support the needs of a small number of students who are having difficulty coping with school life. The core members of the Pastoral Care Team include:

- ✚ Principal - Mr. Sheehan
- ✚ Deputy Principal – Ms. Kirwan
- ✚ Guidance Counsellor – Ms. Whelan (meets with the team once a term)
- ✚ SENCO – Ms. Flannery (meets with the team once a term)
- ✚ Year Heads & tutors– Mr. Keneally, Mr. McGrath, Ms. O’Dwyer, Mr. Morley, Mr. F. McGrath & Mr. Kelly.

If necessary other members of staff may be invited to the meeting provided it is in the best interests of the student being discussed. The pastoral care team are scheduled to meet once every week to review the needs of students and plan for future requirements. However, if necessary the Pastoral Care team will meet more frequently to ensure the needs of the students are being met in the best possible manner.

To assist the Care team in their role the programme *Check and Connect* has been introduced. Year Heads will liaise with the Guidance Counsellor and suggest boys would benefit from an ongoing supportive intervention. *Check & Connect* is an intervention used with pupils who show warning signs of disengagement with school and who are at risk of not reaching their full potential or falling under the category of school refusal. At the core of *Check & Connect* is a trusting relationship between the student and their mentor. Students are referred to *Check & Connect* when they show warning signs of disengaging from school, such as poor attendance, behavioural issues, and/or low grades.

## **Inclusion and SEN support co-ordinator/Subject Teacher/Other Support Staff**

**The SEN Coordinator**, subject to the direction of the principal, assumes responsibility for the overall provision for special educational needs within the school. They coordinate the data gathering, screening and testing in relation to the special educational needs of students. They plan for the transition of students identified as having special educational needs to and from post primary school. They take a lead role in making arrangements for planning, implementation and review of student support plans. They support the communication of information regarding students' needs to subject teachers and year heads. They liaise with special needs assistants, the Guidance Counsellor, Year heads, tutors and subject teachers. They also liaise with outside agencies such as NEPS, the NCSE and allied health professionals. They make applications for reasonable accommodations in the State Examinations for students with special educational needs.

**Subject teachers** - have the final 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/SEN Coordinator when specialist competence is required with due regard to confidentiality.

**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. Members of staff act as class tutors to individual class groups and this is largely a pastoral role which supports the work of the year head. It is hugely valuable and a great help to have tutors who liaise on a daily basis with the class groups. While this time does not constitute part of the Junior Cert allocation for wellbeing, its effectiveness is widely recognised by all members of the school community, staff, students and parents.

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

**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. Such engagements are planned and delivered in line with circular 0043/2018.

**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. 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) Hosting seminars on topics of interest to parents and pupils (with approval of the BOM)
- (iv) Contributing to the development and review of the school guidance plan and, when possible,
- (v) Providing personal assistance to the school guidance programme.

**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 Scoil na mBráithre. 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, PE and CSPE collectively 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 Scoil na mBráithre 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 tutor, subject teacher, class teacher, year head, guidance counsellor, support staff member, deputy principal and principal as they see fit. Fellow students also have a part to play in supporting their peers in difficulty.

## Care Team/Mental Health/Outside Agencies

- ✚ Team chaired by Principal or Deputy Principal records kept by individuals
- ✚ Counselling cases distributed according to the GCs classes or as decided by Team
- ✚ Co-operation with outside agencies to be discussed and decided by the Team

## 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 are provided with an appointment slip. The student must provide their relevant teacher with this appointment slip before attending their appointment. Students are advised to maximise their 1 on 1 time for career advice as multiple visits are not guaranteed. Follow up appointments, however, may be necessary and will be organized (typically to a max of 3 on a given issue/topic). Parents/Guardians may also make appointments with all staff members (including the Guidance Counsellor) 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, tutor, subject teacher or/and management to be present at a meeting. Notes may be made and kept at meetings.

## Confidentiality/Child Protection

A professional relationship involving confidentiality is at the core of the Counselling Service in the school. The Guidance 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
- ✚ 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 has clear procedures in the event of self-harm within the School (see Child Protection Policy). The School in its duty of care adheres to the procedures as outlined in **the 'Child Protection Guidelines for Post Primary Schools'** and **'Children First, National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children'** and in accordance with Scoil na mBráithre Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment.

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

- ✚ 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 Paul Sheehan) 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 supports of the school should continue to be made available to the child.*
- ✚ 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*

## 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” ETB and UCAS
- + CAMHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
- + Local Gardaí services

## Testing & 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, prediction of academic performance, categorisation of occupational interests, assessment of behaviour, 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, behavioural change and with developing skills for coping with ever changing circumstances. Some of the assessments used in Scoil na mBráithre.

### + Interest Assessments:

Students conduct interest assessment on careers websites such as [www.careersportal.ie](http://www.careersportal.ie), 123tests.com and [www.qualifax.ie](http://www.qualifax.ie) (and others) and also using other paper versions such as the Career Decision-Making Resource.

### + CAT4 for Incoming 1st Years

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 CAT4'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. The results of CAT4s can inform the work of the Year Head in academic monitoring and that of the SEN.

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'.

Children with special needs may require more help to cope with aspects of school and the transition to 3<sup>rd</sup> level or world of work. Teachers, Special Needs coordinator, and the Guidance Counsellor will liaise with parents, support services and disability/Access Officers etc. to best assist these students.

Within Scoil na mBráithre testing and assessment is administered by the SEN department and the Guidance Counsellor. At Scoil na mBráithre raw results of CAT4 tests are NOT in general shared with teachers, parents or students (to avoid comparisons being made) but a summary report of additional assistances needed to support SLD students and high achievers is delivered to staff by the SENCO and is available to parents. The School is developing a separate SEN Policy which guides this process.

### **Bereavement Support**

The Principal, Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellor, student care team, teachers and other staff support students who experience bereavement, separation or loss.

- ✚ Where we know a bereavement is imminent, if appropriate, support is offered beforehand
- ✚ In conjunction with the principal, ensure that all teachers are made aware of a bereavement or loss, especially the year-head and tutor
- ✚ Attend removal and funeral
- ✚ Meet student on his or her return to school
- ✚ Inform staff if student is having particular difficulties
- ✚ Seek outside help or assistance for a student and his/her family should the need arise
- ✚ The Critical Incident Management Plan Guides School procedures in the event of a sudden loss

### **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 and Children First Guidelines.

### **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). Scoil na mBráithre through its various and multiple ICT resources, enables such student engagement with ICT and the acquiring of appropriate ICT knowledge and skills. The Inspectorate's '*Looking at Guidance*' found that 'most students feel competent or very competent in the use of ICT to access information'. (Section 3.4, page 27). Thus, CBS considers it important for guidance classes and students generally to have access to reliable ICT labs and sufficiently fast broadband, so they may use the extensive range of tools available through the internet to access guidance relevant information.

The School is also committed to enabling and encouraging those students without ICT equipment at home with the ability to use a variety of School based relevant resources as well as websites (CareersPortal, Qualifax, UCAS, etc.).

### **Implementation**

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 2 years.

### **One to One Teaching/Counselling/Supervision**

- ✚ In situations where one-to-one teaching/ counselling or supervision takes place, every effort is made to ensure that it takes place in an open environment, (Open door / door with a glass pane).
- ✚ The teacher should be positioned facing the door
- ✚ Any blinds etc, on the glass panel on the door, should be left open for the duration.
- ✚ To allow for privacy for the student, he/she should sit with her back to the door.
- ✚ In an environment where the above guidelines are not possible it is recommended that the door to the room remain open, for transparency for all parties.

- ✚ Parents of students who are to be involved in one-to-one teaching/ counselling/ supervision will be informed and their agreement sought where appropriate.
- ✚ Any work being carried out by our Special Needs Assistants will be carried out under the direction of the classteacher in an open environment.
- ✚ The Principal is responsible for ensuring that any visitors who are to work with children on a 1:1 basis are appropriately vetted, (e.g. HSE nurse, Psychologist, SENO etc...)
- ✚ This policy is in keeping with the school ethos of providing a safe and secure environment for learning for all pupils and the wider school community.

### ***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, for example linking topics like resilience between SPHE, Religion and Careers classes. 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***

The 4th, 5th and 6th year students are timetabled for one class period per week of formal guidance. The classroom guidance is delivered on a spiral approach. In Transition Year students are looking broadly at career sectors that are available to them and examining the world of work through their social placement and work experience. The 5th year sees the students building on this knowledge with more detailed information on their options after second level and application procedures. Finally in 6th year the work is focused on the students interests and how they finalise an individualised plan for their future endeavours.

Area of development: Currently 3<sup>rd</sup> Years do not have formal guidance. Possibility of planning one module at the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> Year liasing with SPHE.

### ***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 through email or during break times. 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. In this environment students can explore their world, begin to overcome difficulties arising and help them achieve their full potential. When a situation arises that is beyond the competencies of the Guidance Counsellor and the Care team, a referral to the health services or advising parents to make an individual referral to a medical professional will occur.

Group counselling involves students taking on a helping role with other students under the supervision of the guidance counsellor. Group counselling may be beneficial for issues that arise among a group of students who are comfortable together.

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 in relation to the world of third level college courses and employment. This also allows the student to make an informed choice and take responsibility for their own future.

### ***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
-  Pupils with Additional Needs

### **Junior Cycle Pre-Entry**

- ✚ Open evening with parents
- ✚ Tour of school – information for parents and potential pupils
- ✚ Subject choice video and information booklet sent to parents
- ✚ CAT4 and WRAT5 Assessment Tests
- ✚ Setting up extra educational support and learning support classes with the Special Education Department
- ✚ Liaising with 6<sup>th</sup> class teaches of pupils with Additional needs. This information will be disseminated to teachers in September.
- ✚ Area of development: Possible meeting with the sixth-class teachers in June

### **Junior Cycle First Year Guidance**

- ✚ Meet and Greet virtual evening
- ✚ Taster subject options – virtual information night with parents
- ✚ Exam preparation and study skills classes before Christmas
- ✚ Analysis of CAT4 results and letter to parents of gifted students
- ✚ SPHE programme
- ✚ General educational support and individual counselling as needed
- ✚ Parent –Teacher Meeting
- ✚ Regular consultation with teachers to ensure all students are settled into our 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 external supports when required.
- ✚ Guidance is delivered on a weekly basis through SPHE classes
- ✚ Area of development: Parents evening on the challenges of secondary school and the new skills needed by both parents and students to make a good transition – study skills etc

### **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.

### **Junior Cycle Second Year Guidance**

- ✚ Guidance through SPHE programme
- ✚ General educational support and individual counselling as needed

- ✚ Parent –Teacher Meeting
- ✚ One to one guidance upon request or referral
- ✚ Monitor educational progress and study skills sessions

### **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.

### **Junior Cycle Third Year Guidance**

- ✚ Talk for parents regarding 5<sup>th</sup> Year subject options
- ✚ Junior Cert RACE applications
- ✚ Counselling and individual Guidance sessions.
- ✚ Study skills and Exam preparation
- ✚ Parent –Teacher Meeting
- ✚ Collaborate on a regular basis with year head and class teachers.
- ✚ Offer group, individual personal or educational counselling when required.
- ✚ 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.
- ✚ 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.

### **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.
- ✚ Area of development: Meeting with Third Years who intend going straight to Fifth Year
- ✚ Career module in SPHE which covers subject choice
- ✚ 5th year student representatives from choice subjects will set up information stands, all students making subject choice will be given time to discuss their options at each stand.

## **Senior Cycle - Transition Year Guidance Programme**

- + DATS tests on the last week of December
- + DATS feedback after Christmas – individual interview with TY's to discuss subject choice
- + Guidance module consisting using Brian Comerford Classroom Guidance – One class per week.
- + Parents evening going through different subject options
- + Work Experience and Community Work preparation (TY C0-ordinator)
- + Speakers, Site visits, Open Days, College immersion programmes etc
- + College experience courses
- + Explore the concept of work experience. Through this to allow the students to realise the depth of knowledge they gain about themselves and areas of employment they may be suited to.
- + Each student will participate in group and individual projects. Some of which will be presented to the class. This serves to deepen their knowledge of the area they are researching and develop presentation skills.
- + 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](http://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.
- + 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.
- + Area of development: Virtual meeting with parents to discuss results of DATS and how they can be used to choose LC subjects.
- + Taster classes with subject choices

### **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.

## **Senior Cycle - Fifth Year Guidance Programme**

- + Guidance Module in conjunction with Religion Module. This seven week module current will see the 6<sup>th</sup> Year classes every other week. Resources used are, Qualifax, Careers Portal, Classroom Guidance and requires access to computers.
- + All 5<sup>th</sup> Years will have an online portfolio comprising of a number of modules.
- + Guest Speakers

- ✚ In September many 5<sup>th</sup> Years wish to change options subjects necessitating discussion with GCs. The Year Head will facilitate the moving of subjects. The GC will print out any paperwork discussing the ramifications of changing subjects.
- ✚ Subject level change also happens a lot in 5<sup>th</sup> year and require meeting with a GC
- ✚ Individual guidance and academic support
- ✚ Attending the PTM
- ✚ Testing – interest inventories and personality test. This includes the Career Interest Inventory and the career interest test and personality test available on [www.careersportal.com](http://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.
- ✚ 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.
- ✚ Area of Development: Intense study skills session with pupils

### **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.

### **Senior Cycle - Sixth Year Guidance Programme**

- ✚ Guidance Module, in conjunction with Religion. These classes cover all of the information needed for Irish/International college applications as well as preparation for Open Days.
- ✚ At least one interview with each student re college courses, career decisions etc
- ✚ Recording and analysing of their CAO choices
- ✚ Guidance Newsletter –September, important CAO deadlines & college opening days
- ✚ Interview preparation for FETAC, UCAS, EUNICAS etc
- ✚ Speakers from Colleges and Professions
- ✚ Preparation for Open Days and Career Fairs
- ✚ DARE & HEAR and NUI Irish Exemption applications
- ✚ RACE applications for students with physical and emotional issues.
- ✚ Classes on applying to UCAS and applying to study abroad
- ✚ CAO talk for parents during 6<sup>th</sup> year PTM
- ✚ Meeting students by appointment after the CAO results in August
- ✚ Lunchtime drop in every week for 6<sup>th</sup> Years – get advice/make longer appointment etc.
- ✚ Study skills and goal setting to be covered a number of times throughout the year.
- ✚ Parents workshop which will cover, How the CAO works – how do the offers work.

- ✚ How to support your son through his Leaving Cert. How to search for college course/plc's/apprenticeship.
- ✚ Inform students about open days and upcoming events that may be beneficial for students to attend.
- ✚ Area of Development: Intense study skills session with pupils. Workshops on 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
- ✚ To assist them in the decision-making process
- ✚ 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

### **Other Responsibilities of Guidance Counsellors**

- ✚ Correspondence, email, post, phone calls with parents, agencies, colleges etc
- ✚ Keeping up to date with new information by
  - Attending Guidance Counsellor Open Days at Colleges
  - Information sessions on changes in procedures
  - Attending local IGC information sessions/meetings (5-6 per year)
  - Attending the IGC annual conference
- ✚ Recording the destinations of last year's Leaving Certs
- ✚ Giving information via notice boards, announcements, newsletters, website, Google classroom
- ✚ Attending five counselling supervision sessions each year.
- ✚ Referrals, meetings and phone calls with outside agencies e.g. Mental Health Services, Educational Psychologists, Tusla etc

- + Regular meetings
  - o Care Team
  - o Guidance Counsellors
  - o Learning Support
- + Counselling and support referral system and record keeping
- + Supporting subject teachers and discussing individuals and referrals with them
- + NUI Irish Exemptions and discussing school exemptions with students and parents
- + Subject Changes – discussing (with students, teachers, parents) and recording
- + Training and mentoring of student Guidance Counsellors from UCC
- + Graduate Destinations Survey in September
- + Area of Development: School website – guidance section. Positive Mental Health programmes

### **Aptitude Tests**

- + CATS for incoming First Years
- + WRAT5
- + DATS for TYs and students who skipped TY

### **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 workshop for 6th year parents – CAO, FETAC, supports and the year ahead
- + Individual appointments for 6th years (1 at the beginning of the year to discuss CAO/UCAS/FETAC options
- + Provide all 6th year students and parents with a calendar of events for the year ahead
- + Introduction to exam system and study for first year students
- + Study skills for all classes, including organisation preparation for the year ahead
- + Mental health week for all students with events organised for students during the week (planning)
- + Support around Christmas exams 1st, 3rd and 6th years in particular
- + 1st year CAT4 testing & WRAT5
- + Career and college talks from visiting speakers
- + Lunchtime support for 6<sup>th</sup> Year Students – drop in lunch time advice
- + 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.

- ✚ Check and Connect Programme regularly reviewed

## January – May

- ✚ Career and College talks form visiting speakers
- ✚ Subject choice for 1st years and 3rd/TY students – class work and subject choice booklet
- ✚ 5th year individual career appointments if needed
- ✚ Individual/group appointments for all students undertaking subject choice
- ✚ Well-being programme for all students from 1st to 6th year
- ✚ Post Leaving Certificate College 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
- ✚ 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:** on-going 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) 4 Level E is administered by T. Whelan & S. Flannery to all 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. Students are tested in four areas Verbal, Quantitative, Non-Verbal and Spatial.

### **Other Guidance Service Activities:**

- ✚ Network with local Guidance Counsellors 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 college prospectuses
- ✚ 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

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: \_\_\_\_\_