

De La Salle College Waterford

Guidance & Counselling

Department Plan & Policy

1. Introduction

De la Salle College seeks to enable each student to develop his full potential. De la Salle College's Guidance & Counselling Department Plan & Policy aims to assist the holistic development of all students so that they learn to know and value their talents and abilities and effectively manage their personal transitions while at the same time learn to value and respect others and make a positive contribution to society.

1.1 Mission Statement

De La Salle College Waterford is a Catholic school. It is a learning community where all students are valued and educated in preparation for a meaningful life. The Guidance and Counselling department is part of the pastoral care structure in the school, which is at the heart of this learning community.

The Guidance & Counselling Department works alongside/with the Principal, Deputy Principals, Year Heads, Class Teachers, the Religion Department, Special Educational Needs Team, including SNAs, the School Chaplain / Home School Liaison Officer, SPHE team, auxiliary staff and external personnel/agencies (e.g. School Retention Officer, NEPS, etc.) to provide a support service for the students of De La Salle College.

It is the policy of De La Salle College to support all students in an appropriate manner through guidance and counselling; guidance is a whole school activity in this regard. The Guidance Plan, which incorporates both guidance and counselling services, reflects respect for the individual in its student centred holistic approach. The enhancement of self-esteem and life skills and the development of potential - academic, personal and emotional - leading to greater personal autonomy for all students are its central goals.

The school Guidance Plan is a structured document that describes the school guidance programme and specifies how the guidance needs of students are to be addressed. It includes reference to personal counselling, an integral component of the work of the Guidance Counsellor. This plan is not a rigid template and reflects the uniqueness of De La Salle College in its own particular context and circumstances. This Guidance Plan refers to the 'subject' guidance as it is delivered to De la Salle students cognisant of their needs and mindful of the available resources.

1.2 College Profile

De La Salle College Waterford is an all-boys Catholic School under the trusteeship of Le Chéile. The college is managed by a Board of Management, is funded by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and operates within the regulations and guidelines set down from time to time by that Department. The College follows the curricular programmes prescribed by the Department of Education and Skills, which may be amended from time to time, in accordance with sections 9 and 30 of the Education Act 1998. Within the context and parameters of Department of Education and Skills regulations and resources, as well as the La Sallian ethos, De La Salle College Waterford supports the principles of inclusiveness. Also, it supports equality of access and participation, parental choice in respect of enrolment and a respect for diversity of traditions, values, beliefs, languages and ways of life.

1.3 Ethos

De La Salle College Waterford was founded in 1891 by the De La Salle Brothers and serves as a Catholic school for boys. De La Salle College Waterford seeks to promote an atmosphere of friendliness, discipline and co-operation where everyone can experience respect, encouragement and support. This atmosphere is in harmony with the mission of the Guidance and Counselling Department in De La Salle College.

While every school is a community in which adults and young people live and work together, the La Sallian school is inspired by the vision of St. John Baptist De La Salle that Gospel values must permeate the life of a Catholic school in such a way that students internalise those values and reflect them in their behaviour.

All who work in the College constantly strive to make De La Salle College Waterford a welcoming institution. Our behaviour management strategies and pastoral care structures are built on the principles of justice and fairness. We endeavour to fulfil our mission in partnership with the De La Salle Brothers, parents/guardians, teachers and all staff, students, trustees and the local community.

1.4 Rationale

This Guidance Plan is guided by these principles and the La Sallian ethos and demonstrates a commitment to provide Pastoral Care, Guidance and Counselling services to the students and teachers of De La Salle College and to discharge its responsibility under the Education Act (1998), Section (9) Subsection (c) which states that “schools must ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices”.

The provision of guidance is a statutory requirement for schools under this Act.

Guidance is defined as:

a range of learning experiences provided in a developmental sequence that assist students to make choices (personal and social, educational and career) about their lives and to make transitions consequent on these choices.

(NCGE Planning the School Guidance Programme, 1.1, p.8)

Circular 09/2012 refers to the need for schools to “ensure that the guidance counsellor has one to one time towards meeting the counselling needs of the students facing emotional difficulties and crisis” but states that “schools must manage guidance provision from within their standard staffing allocation”, removing the ex-quota status previously held by career guidance counsellors. As such, “guidance provision is to be managed by schools from within their standard staffing schedule allocation” (Circular 09/2012 section 4) and schools must work within their available resources to ensure the statutory provision of guidance and to meet the varied needs of the student population.

Guidance is now regarded as a core element of the school’s overall school development plan and intersects, links and overlaps with elements of Pastoral Care, RE, SPHE, Anti-Bullying Policy, the Code of Behaviour, etc. and is provided through the school guidance plan which includes the guidance programme.

2. The School Guidance Plan

A School Guidance Plan provides an essential framework for delivery of the school's Guidance Programme. Successful planning ensures a structured response to the educational, vocational and personal and social development of the students. In De la Salle College we are committed to excellence and through reflective practice to continually improving the quality and provision of guidance and counselling and pastoral care. The Guidance Programme is an integral part of the school curriculum and as such involves the whole school community. The Guidance Counsellors consult and liaise with the following key personnel in the planning and development of the Programme: Principal, Deputy Principal, members of the Student Support Team, Programme Coordinators, School Chaplain, SEN Coordinators, SPHE teachers and RE teachers.

The School Guidance Plan:

- Provides a framework for the delivery of the school's guidance programme
- Ensures a structured response to student's personal, social, educational and career guidance needs
- Is inclusive, providing for the junior, senior, special education needs etc. of all students.
- Includes all guidance activities: classroom sessions, Vocational Guidance Interviews, attendance at career exhibitions, and open days etc., meeting with management, support agencies, personal counselling etc.

2.1 To whom will the plan apply?

De la Salle College seeks to enable each student to develop his full potential. De la Salle College's Guidance Plan aims to assist the holistic development of all students so that they learn to know and value their talents and abilities and effectively manage

their personal transitions while at the same time learn to value and respect others and make a positive contribution to society. The plan addresses the guidance 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.

2.2 What is Guidance?

Guidance in second-level 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 (personal, social, educational and career) and decisions about their lives and to make transitions consequent on these choices. It is the policy of De La Salle College to support all students; the Guidance programme addresses the needs of students through a range of activities which incorporate the following three interlinked areas:

1. Personal and Social Education / Development
2. Educational Guidance
3. Vocational / Career Guidance

It is envisaged that the guidance counsellor divides time equally between each area and is sensitive to the needs of all students and in particular those who need extra support. Counselling is also 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 be seen as the empowerment of students to make decisions, solve problems, develop coping strategies and resolve difficulties they be experiencing. Counselling may include personal counselling, educational counselling, career counselling or combinations of these.

- **Personal and Social Education / Development**

Personal and social development and support in De la Salle College aims to help students to make decisions, solve problems, resolve difficulties and develop coping strategies that will empower them to live more fulfilled lives. All students commencing their studies in De la Salle College are made aware of the counselling service available to them – the School Open Night which includes a presentation by the guidance counsellor, visits to primary schools by the guidance counsellor(s) and the 1st year school induction process which includes a tour of the school, identifying offices (including Guidance Counselling offices) facilitate such awareness. Through subjects such as SPHE and RE, the pastoral care structure in the school and the incoming ‘class tutor’ system, help-seeking behaviour is encouraged. Students are encouraged to talk to any member of staff with whom they feel comfortable, if they are experiencing difficulty. Our aim is to provide a strongly supportive presence, in particular in times of personal difficulty. An interdisciplinary approach is adopted. The student support team / pastoral care meetings, teaching and support personnel from a number of departments who may collaborate and liaise with pupils homes (e.g. Year Head & School Chaplain) all collaborate as necessary in order to best support our students.

Individual support is seen as an integral part of the student support system and as part of the school’s duty of care for the students in a holistic way, taking into account their individual needs. At both the Student Support Meetings and Senior Management meetings, Year-heads, Deputy Principals and the Principal may discuss the needs of students (anonymously) and the most appropriate supports and structures are discussed and put in place as appropriate; a referral to the guidance counsellor may often form part of the support plan. In addition, students can be referred for support at their own request, the request of parents and other teachers (often through the Year head system) or if a friend or peer draws it to the attention of a member of staff that a student is encountering difficulties.

Counselling, on an individual or group basis, can be integral to supporting the 'personal and social development' of our students. Personal counselling aims to assist students explore their thoughts and feelings, giving care and support to students learning to manage the various challenges and developments in growing and changing. Great emphasis is placed on endeavouring to raise and enhance pupils' self-esteem. (Counselling) Supports can only be put in place if a student is willing to participate and after an initial referral it is always the student's choice whether he wishes to continue. At all times it is the policy of the Guidance & Counselling Department to respect and value a student who is receiving support and to provide the student with a safe, positive and accepting atmosphere. In line with best practice, students who are receiving external support (e.g. counselling with an outside agency, perhaps by referral) will not attend both internal (school) and external counselling – to avoid conflict with the counselling process. Many students may attend for a single counselling session, while others, in response to their individual needs and the concerns raised, may require additional counselling sessions. However, in light of timetable constraints and the number of students in the school, as per IGC and DES guidelines, students will generally attend for a maximum of six sessions. If a student requires support which goes beyond the resources of the school (e.g. beyond the maximum permitted sessions), or if a student requires targeted expertise intervention which is beyond the expertise and resources of the school (e.g. referral to the SHIP programme for self harm and suicidal ideation) or emergency intervention (e.g. suicidal ideation or attempted suicide) then a student will be referred for additional support, in consultation with the parents/guardians; the school counselling service will be seen as a 'holding service' in such cases – supporting students in the interim space between referral and external support.

- **Educational Guidance**

"Guidance provision has an essential role to play in ensuring that individuals' educational and career decisions are firmly based and in assisting them to develop effective self-management of their learning and career paths". (Resolution on Guidance, 2004).

The Guidance Plan recognises the critical importance of the provision of educational guidance at both junior and senior levels. Educational guidance includes empowering students in the areas of subject choice, study skills and examination skills, and consulting with parents about related matters.

This provision will be developmental in nature and will aspire above all to be empowering and motivating to the individual and groups, in harmony with the La Sallian ethos. It is our aim that our students will become aware of and confident in their unique giftedness and potential – classroom guidance and individual meetings underscored by self-evaluation by the student and reflection on the barriers to learning will support these aims. The provision of accurate and up-to-date information will form a significant part of these meetings and of Guidance classes.

Educational Guidance commences prior to a student's entry into De la Salle College. The Guidance Counsellor visits feeder schools and meets with sixth class teachers to identify students who may require support. In addition, incoming first year assessments are conducted prior to entry in late February / early March, these assessments in addition to contact with primary schools and parents (as appropriate) and the incoming 1st year student application forms (which include information on recent assessments, etc.) are used to generate mixed ability class groupings and to identify students who may be best supported by the Junior Certificate Schools Programme. The Guidance Counsellor will liaise with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators regarding evaluating these assessments in order to identify students who may require extra help (subject to available resources). DATS (Differential Aptitude Tests), the Rothwell Miller test and various other career interest inventories may be used in 3rd, 4th, 5th & 6th year to support students with subject choice and career choice, as needed. Information Evenings are provided by the Guidance Counsellor, in conjunction with the Principal and programme co-ordinators for incoming 1st year students, 3rd, TY, and 6th year students. Further details on Educational Guidance provision for each year are listed in Guidance Programme which forms part of this document.

• Vocational / Career Guidance

Vocational/Career Guidance is an on-going process which commences when students enter the school and continues throughout their secondary school education. Vocational Guidance in De La Salle College recognises the enormity of the decisions facing the young adult leaving second-level education; it involves empowering students to recognise their talents and abilities and enabling them to make informed choices and take responsibility for their own futures. Our objective is to provide accurate information and assist the student with the choices he faces. All students will be encouraged to aim for the highest level of education/training achievable to them. They will be encouraged to see their education as life-long, and as a means to securing both employability and the fulfilment of their human potential. Students will be guided towards making informed, realistic choices about their future plans after their Leaving Certificate. This takes place during classroom Guidance classes and individual career interviews.

Guidance activities that assist students to make informed choices include:

- Personal counselling
- Assessment using psychometric instruments and inventories
- Career information (classroom, personal vocational guidance interviews, attendance at career events and guests speakers)
- Use of online career resources e.g. Qualifax.ie and CareersPortal.ie – introduced in classroom guidance sessions.
- Development of self awareness
- Personal Vocational Guidance Interviews
- Decision making skills & Planning Skills (e.g. part of the SPHE programme)
- Information on Post Leaving Certificate Choices / Pathways to Further Education
- Job Search Skills including interview preparation (e.g. PLC course interviews)
- Work Experience (an integral part of both the TY and LCA programmes)

2.3 Goals & Aims

The Guidance Programme in **De La Salle College** aims to provide support for learners to enable them to make wise and informed personal, educational and career choices. De la Salle College's Guidance Department strives to be inclusive, providing for the needs of all students. The guidance counsellor has primary responsibility for the delivery of the College's Guidance and Counselling Programme. However, the important role of all other members of the College Staff is acknowledged and their relevant contributions to the planning and delivery of many aspects of the programme; a whole school approach is essential in terms of delivery and in achieving the objectives:

- To enable pupils grow in independence and take responsibility for themselves
- To develop and explore an awareness and acceptance of their talents and abilities.
- To make informed choices about their lives and follow through on those choices.

The Guidance & Counselling Department in De la Salle College strives to help all students in the school to:

- develop an awareness and acceptance of their talents and abilities
- identify and explore opportunities
- provide support for learners to enable them to make informed personal, educational and career choices.
- grow in independence and take responsibility for themselves
- make informed choices about their lives and follow through on these choices

The **aims** of the Guidance programme are as follows:

- Foster a sense of personal responsibility for identifying future educational/vocational goals.
- Provide experiences that promote career development and prepare students for the transition to work/higher education.
- Focus on an individual's strength and potentials so as to create a strategy for promoting discussion of student's educational/careers development in order to discourage excuses for irresponsible action.
- Introduce and foster a process of evaluating realistically, attainable career/higher education goals.
- Encourage the pupils to define expectations.
- Overcome any information deficit on careers/education.

2.4 Whole School Approach

The Guidance Plan recognises the important role that the whole school community plays in supporting and implementing these aims, including the Principal, Deputy Principals, Year Heads, Class Teachers, Subject and Programme Co-ordinators (e.g. RE, SPHE, JCSP, TY, LCA), School Chaplain, SEN Co-ordinators, Resource Teachers, Learning Support Teachers, SNA's, the Board of Management/Trustees, Parents Council, Students Council, auxiliary staff including administration staff, the students themselves, the local community and the De la Salle Brothers with whom we share our learning community.

De la Salle College operates a whole school approach to guidance which reflects the role of School Management, Principal, Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellors, Year Heads, Tutors, Subject Teachers, Parents, Students and Local Community.

For instance:

- ***The Board of Management and School Management team*** have a responsibility to ensure that provision and practice of guidance in the school is of the highest standard possible. This includes managing the process of guidance planning and provision in co-operation with the guidance school staff involved in guidance and other school partners such as parents. The Guidance Counsellor communicates regularly with the Principal and Deputy Principals, and attends a weekly meeting with the Principal, Deputy Principal, Chaplain & Year Heads to discuss the educational, vocational, social and personal developmental of the students. These meetings allow for students at risk to be identified, allocate personal counselling duties and decide on referrals where necessary.

The **Principal** oversees the Whole School Programme of which Guidance Counselling is an important component. The Principal is the Designated Liaison Person in the school and as such immediate and direct contact is made with the Principal by the guidance counsellor and indeed all staff should there be a concern regarding Child Protection.

The **Principal & Deputy Principals** are heavily involved in both student welfare and student discipline in the school and, following communication with students and parents/guardians referrals may arise. For instance, students may be referred to the Guidance Counsellor and/or School Chaplain following suspension or if there is a concern regarding early school leaving.

- Regular formal and informal contact with the five **Year Heads** in the school is integral to the work of the guidance counsellor; the role of the Year Head demands greater contact and understanding of the students, their behaviour and their circumstances. The Year Head is an important point of contact for teachers with concerns regarding their students. Through their Year Head duties and contact

with the students themselves and their parents/guardians as needed, a more thorough and focused referral process occurs (using the Student Referral Form), where interventions can be targeted and the best interests of the student are supported through team-work with the Guidance Counsellor and Year Head and Chaplain.

- The **School Chaplain** plays a significant role in supporting the education, social and personal development of our students. In De La Salle College, the Chaplain has a significant and essential role in liaising with parents and students and facilitating dialogue between home and school – this role is particularly important during times of personal crisis for a student/family and in supporting student retention. The School Chaplain works in close co-operation with the Principal, Deputy Principals, Guidance Counsellors and Year Heads, Regional Retention Officer and Social Services in this regard.
- **Programme Co-ordinators & Subject Teachers** often have a key role in providing support to students and information and advice relating to their subject discipline and related careers. Some teachers have additional formal responsibilities through management, pastoral care roles, co-ordination roles and through participation in programmes such as RE and SPHE.

For instance, the guidance counsellor is in regular liaison with the **JCSP / TY / LCA co-ordinator** regarding scheduling and planning guidance activities and student welfare as needed. Arrangements are made to take students to relevant career events. Preparation, support and advice is offered for work experience – both formally through class contact and informally. The role of the JCSP / TY/ LCA Programme Co-ordinator, similar to the Year Head, demands greater contact and understanding of the students in these programmes and often regular contact with parents/ guardians as necessary and is a point of contact for class teachers, as such the programme co-ordinator may often make referrals to the guidance counsellor

following contact with class teachers, students and parents (using the Student Referral Form).

Individual **subject teachers** may be sought out by students on an informal basis for advice and information. Teachers who interact with students outside the confines of the classroom (e.g. coaching, choir, etc.) may have a particular relationship with the student body which enables them to play an important role in the personal, social, moral and educational development of students. All staff members may consult with the Guidance Counsellor on the needs of an individual student and may refer a student to the Guidance Counsellor; teachers are asked to complete a Student Referral Form (available from the Guidance Counsellor). As a matter of course the Principal must be informed by the Guidance Counsellor of all referrals as appropriate.

- **Parents** have by far the most influence, directly or indirectly, on the choices made by young people. Parents have a major influence on the environment in which the young person lives including values, attitudes and lifestyle. Parents have an important role to play in helping to establish the needs and priorities of the school guidance programme and in supporting the programme. Parents can also participate in guidance through:
 1. Communication and consultation with the staff involved in guidance
 2. Attendance at relevant information and other meetings at school
 3. Contributing to the development and review of the school guidance plan when possible
 4. Providing personal assistance to the school guidance programme

- **Students** are the focus of the school guidance programme. Students (through the student council and informal consultation with students in Guidance classes and one-to-one guidance consultations) may be encouraged to identify and establish

needs and priorities of the guidance programme. Students will often self refer for counselling or consult with the guidance counsellor when concerned about a peer. Students are a valuable resource in the classroom and through classroom discussion, vocational preparation and personal development topics are developed and reinforced.

- The **Local Community** through its agencies, organisations and institutions provides young people with resources for career exploration, information and other forms of assistance and support. Such agencies, organisations and institutions include providers of training, further and higher education, employment and youth services. The local community also greatly supports our students by facilitating the work experience programmes in both LCA and TY.
- **Third Level Colleges** such as Waterford Institute of Technology and Waterford College of Further Education give students a vision for the future and support the transition to third level through a range of programmes and initiatives (e.g. Scifest, Access programmes) , special awards (e.g. Business) and in school and evening presentations (e.g. CAO, HEAR & DARE information evenings for parents and students) and open days.

2.5 Overview of Key Personnel involved in the provision of Guidance

- Board of Management
- Principal : Ms Margaret Betts
- Deputy Principals: Mr Declan O Brien & Mr Thomas Bourke
- Year Heads: Ms Agnes Guerin, Mr Ray Daly, Mr Enda O'Doherty, Mr Declan Costello Ms Eileen Doolan.

- Assistant Year Heads, which includes a designated role regarding supporting the Transition from Primary to Post-Primary School – the 1st year Mentor, Ms Noreen Hanratty.
- Guidance Counsellors: Ms Sinead Murphy & Ms Clodagh Carey
- School Chaplain: Mr Dermot Dooley
- LCA, TY & JCSP Co-ordinator: Ms Julieann Cantwell
- Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator(s)
- Class tutors
- Subject Teachers – in particular RE and SPHE teachers
- Ancillary staff, particularly Main Office/Reception staff

3. Relevant Policies & Programmes

3.1 Policies which are relevant to Guidance

The plan addresses the guidance 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. The School Guidance Plan is part of Whole School Development Planning (currently in development in 2015) and intersects and interlinks with several policies including:

Pastoral Care Policy

SPHE Policy

RSE Policy

RE Policy

Anti-Bullying Policy

Admissions Policy

Child Protection Policy

Code of Behaviour

Complaints Procedures

DES Child Protection Guidelines

Attendance Policy

Dignity at Work Policy

Mobile Devices Policy

Student ICT AUP

Suspensions and Expulsions Policy

Study Rules

The School Guidance Policy is aware of and informed by the legislative requirements of:

The Education Act (1998)

The Education Welfare Act (2000)

The Equal Status Act (2000)

The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004)

Data Protection Acts (1988)

3.2 Existing Programmes & Activities

Existing programmes & activities that support the achievement of the aims of the school guidance plan include:

Pastoral Care System

Social, Personal and Health Education

Relationships and Sexuality Education

Religious Education

Civic, Social and Political Education

First Year Induction Programme

Subject Choice Programme for Senior Cycle

Transition Year Programme

Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme

Extra-curricular Activities

4. Guidance Activities & Procedures

The three key areas of the guidance programme (Personal and Social Development, Educational Guidance & Vocational / Career Guidance) are supported by the guidance counsellors' professional skills and training and collaboration with the guidance partners (i.e. school management, subject teachers, school chaplain) who play significant and vital roles in supporting the personal, social, educational and career development of our students. As noted by the DES, guidance is a whole-school activity and as such many of the activities & procedures listed below reflect the community initiative and community of cooperation adopted by De la Salle College.

4.1 Counselling

(Personal / Social & Career Guidance)

Counselling is offered on a one to one basis and is generally short-term in nature. The service operates on an appointment basis however priority will be given in the event of an emergency. During the course of one's school day many issues and concerns may present for students. Counselling offers the opportunity to discuss in private any such issues or concerns which impact on academic performance or personal well-being. It is a key role of the Guidance Counsellor to empower students to make decisions, solve problems, change behaviours and resolve issues in their lives. The focus of counselling may be on personal, educational and career issues, individually or in combination. The guidance counsellor may help the student explore alternatives and develop strategies for change or consider referral if appropriate. In a person-centred, caring environment students are empowered to self-actualise.

It is generally understood that conversations with the Guidance Counsellor are confidential. Students should feel comfortable that conversations with the guidance counsellor are private and confidential and this confidentiality will be maintained except in the following circumstances:

- a. Where a student is at risk or is considered to be putting themselves or others at risk
- b. Where an illegal activity is going to take place
- c. Where there are concerns regarding child protection.

The School Chaplain also plays a hugely supportive role to our students and has a specific mission towards the spiritual care and faith development of the school population and the promotion of religious activities with the school. The School Chaplain offers support to students in times of bereavement, illness, personal and family difficulties, etc; this support may often include counselling.

4.2 Developmental Programmes & Vocational Preparation (Personal / Social, Educational, Careers Guidance)

These programmes are designed to help students to develop their social and personal skills and are met through the guidance programme, SPHE, RSE, RE & CSPE syllabi, RE speakers and developmental workshops (e.g. study skills, drug awareness, De la Salle awards) – see Appendix I for RE speakers. Developmental Programmes include programme options such as the Transition Year programme and Vocational Preparation activities, listed below.

- **Vocational Preparation / Preparation for Working Life
(Personal/Social, Educational, Careers Guidance)**

Students need some experience and preparation for the world of work and how to manage this transition. Work Experience is an integral part of both the TY and LCA programmes in De la Salle College; during work experience the student learns valuable

skills for work and gains insight for their own career preferences. The guidance counsellor liaises with the LCA & TY co-ordinators and this function is met through dedicated work preparation modules and tasks in LCA and TY respectively. This experience informs students on career choices post leaving certificate (see Appendix II for specific information on the Guidance Programme). Experiences that promote the career development of pupils and prepare them for the transition to work, training and higher education include:

- Job Seeking skills development (e.g. completing an application form, CV preparation, interview skills, communication techniques, etc.)
- Work Experience planning, investigation, scenario assessments, etc.
- Visits to workplaces, training institutions, Higher Education colleges, careers exhibitions
- Participation in presentations by visiting speakers
- Participation in Mock interviews

4.3 Information

Information is critical to decision making and in particular for career guidance and making informed lifestyle choices. The Guidance Counsellor helps pupils to acquire useful information to assist them in decision-making. This entails knowing what information pupils require: identifying sources of useful information; setting up systems for acquiring, storing and disseminating information; and showing pupils how to process and use information. Information can be provided by subject teachers on their own specialisms but also by outside bodies or individuals (guest speakers on a range of topics – careers, social, personal) and through the guidance service via the Guidance Notice Boards. The RE department play a significant role in this regard through the range of RE speakers organised annually. It is also important to empower the student to find and disseminate their own information; Use of CACG (Computer Assisted Career Guidance), e.g. Careersportal and Qualifax, is useful in this. The guidance counsellor also regularly makes presentations to parents and students on a

range of guidance topics (e.g. 1st year Study skills, 5th year Subject Choice, 6th Year CAO Process).

4.4 Consultation Services (Personal/Social, Educational, Careers Guidance)

The Guidance Counsellor engages in a two way process of consultation with parents, teachers, school management and referral agencies. Consultation may include advocacy by the Guidance Counsellor on behalf of a pupil. Open channels of communication, honesty, integrity and respect for all parties is essential. The guidance counsellor regularly consults with significant adults in the students' lives, both formally and informally, e.g. teachers, parents, principal, deputy principal, year heads, tutors, programme coordinators). This is achieved through presentations to parents, parent-teacher meetings, management meetings, pastoral care/student support meetings and informal consultation with colleagues (teachers, year-heads, etc). This process both enables these significant adults in young people's lives to be more effective supports for them and enhances the guidance service through targeted provision & indeed the valuable insight and advice often gleaned from parents/guardians and colleagues.

- **Consultation with Parents/Guardians**

Parents are welcome to make an appointment to meet/speak with the Guidance Counsellor to afford them the opportunity to discuss their son's aptitudes, abilities and interests, in educational and occupational planning as well as issues of personal concern if so desired. The aim of the school guidance service is to support parents in their endeavours to help their son with his personal and social development and school progress.

4.5 Referral Services (Personal/Social)

Referrals covers two types of activity: referrals to the counsellor and referrals by the counsellor.

- *Referrals to the Counsellor:*

The Guidance Counsellor may invite a student to come and visit them if they are referred by others. Referrals can be self referral, parental referral, referral by management, Year Head, class tutors and subject teachers (often through the Year Head) or referral by a friend or peer. For instance, a friend or peer may draw it to the attention of a member of staff that a student is encountering difficulties. The voluntary participation in counselling of the referred pupil must be respected by all concerned. Students are encouraged to discuss their problems/worries with their parent/guardian where appropriate. However, confidentiality, with its limits, is respected at all times.

Year Heads & Teachers are asked to complete a *Student Referral Form* (see Appendix III) when making a referral to support record keeping procedures and ensure appropriate counselling provision. Referrals are generally made by the Year Head or Deputy Principals following consultation with and/or referral by parents and/or teachers and discussion with students in order to glean a fuller picture of the student and the associated concerns; thus facilitating a detailed referral. Students may also self-refer or be referred by his peers also. Any member of staff who has a concern for a student which falls under Child Protection legislation (i.e. concern regarding physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect) should immediately contact the Designated Liaison Person, the Principal. Class groups are divided between both guidance counsellors to facilitate ease of referral and a more balanced approach; this information is on display in the staff room and a copy is given to each Year – Head, Deputy Principal & Principal.

- *Referrals by the Counsellor:*

The Guidance Counsellor may often make a referral if a student requires support that is beyond the resources and/or expertise of the school; for instance a student may need assistance from other qualified helpers outside of school or require intervention which is more intensive in duration and focus than the resources of the school can facilitate. The Guidance Counsellor liaises with the pupil, parents/guardians and the Principal when recommending external referral, except in exceptional circumstances such as physical or sexual abuse or neglect by a member of the family – in such cases Child Protection and Department of Health Guidelines are followed. The Guidance Counsellor, in conjunction with the School Chaplain, establishes links with appropriate agencies for referral. When recommending students for counselling it is the policy of the school to issue the parents/guardian with a list of accredited counsellors from the Directory of the Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy or advise parents/guardians to contact their local GP or provide information on local voluntary and state agencies who can provide further help as appropriate. It is not the policy of the school to recommend an individual counsellor.

4.6 Testing & Assessment

The Guidance Counsellor may use a range of psychometric tests for a variety of purposes e.g. categorisation of occupational interests, assessment of behaviour, educational and career planning, personal and social development and, generally, to help students to obtain a better self-understanding (see Appendix IV for a list of DES approved psychometric tests for Guidance). Information from these sources, supplemented by school records and public examination results enable the Guidance Counsellor to assist a pupil in decision-making, problem solving, behavioural change and life changes. Confidentiality will be respected at all times. The Guidance

Counsellor is responsible for the maintenance of professional standards in the administration, interpretation and dissemination of tests and their results.

In addition, the SEN Department completes WRAT4 and CAT 4 assessments with students who may be eligible for reasonable accommodations in the certificate examinations (RACE) and for the purposes of Learning Support and NEPS assessment procedures as required.

- **The remit of the Guidance Counsellor in relation to testing is as follows:**
 - ***Performance tests and school reports:*** In order to engage in effective guidance and counselling of students the Guidance Counsellor has access to school reports and results of performance tests. Student files are stored securely in the Main Office and on the e-portal system; files should not be removed unnecessarily, however, a 'sign in/out' system is in operation should files need to be removed from the Main Office for a period.
 - ***Individual and group tests of general ability:*** These are standardised tests and are administered to incoming first year students by the Guidance Counsellor. Testing usually takes place in late February / early March, in the year of entry to the school. Students and parents are briefed on this assessment at the School Open Night and the guidance counsellor also visits feeder primary schools in advance of the assessment. Incoming 1st years complete a range of assessments prior to entry in order to facilitate mixed ability groupings.
 - ***Aptitude tests:*** These tests are administered by the Guidance Counsellor on a needs basis to students in advance of 5th year subject choice. Best practice is

ensured by administering the DAT to students age 16 + as these tests are normed for age 16+.

- **Interest Assessments:** These assessments may also be conducted on a group basis, usually during careers classes with fourth year students. It may be necessary to conduct interest inventories on a one to one with some students, often in advance of subject choice or as part of career choice.

- **School based Identification Process**

The initial screening processes that take place in De La Salle College are:

- a) Recommendations by parents/guardians on the School Open Night
- b) Entrance Assessment
- c) Information from Primary Schools

The purpose of the entrance assessment is to identify learning needs and to facilitate the organising of mixed ability classes in first year and the formation of a JCSP class. As a follow on from the initial screening process, Guidance Counsellors and relevant staff meet with parents/guardians, where appropriate, to discuss the specific learning needs of their sons.

4.7 Student Support / Pastoral Care Team

A **Student Support / Pastoral Care Team** has been established within the school and plays an integral role in supporting the needs of the students in De la Salle College. Both Guidance Counsellors are members of the Student Support Team. Student Support Team meetings facilitate a space for relevant parties (e.g. Principal, Deputy

Principal, relevant year-head, guidance counsellor, RE teacher, Resource Teacher, SEN Co-ordinator, etc.) to discuss (anonymously) concerns regarding particular students and to suggest methods to best support the student. A designated period is on the school timetable for key personnel in order to facilitate Student Support Meetings.

The Role of the Student Support Services Team is:

- To focus on the support provided for all students in the school
- To provide a discussion forum for student support service related matters
- To take stock of what work is currently being done in this area
- To focus on areas that are in need of improvement and agree on the prioritisation of the work

To arrange for the monitoring, implementation and evaluation of proposals aimed at improving the Support Services Programme

5. Guidance Curriculum

The Guidance curriculum may be divided into two components:

- Formal Guidance
- Informal Guidance

5.1 Formal Guidance

The Formal Guidance curriculum is delivered using two forms of intervention employing a number of methodologies:

1. Individual contact of a personal counselling nature and careers/vocational guidance.
2. Classroom guidance delivered in regular weekly classes/ rotating modules/class group or year group intervention as required – see Appendix II & Section 5.4 for more details.

5.2 Informal Guidance

The Informal Guidance programme consists of liaising with other Teaching Staff/Management to promote cross curricular links and to enhance the development of a whole school policy in relation to the delivery of The Guidance Plan. Meetings with Parents/Guardians and outside agencies form an integral part of informal guidance.

5.3 Method of Delivery of Guidance Programme

Formal Guidance classes (of one period per week) are timetabled for transition year and sixth year students; a Guidance module is also delivered to both 5th and 6th year LCA class groups as part of the VPG subject timetable. In addition, the guidance counsellor liaises with subject teachers, particularly SPHE teachers, when delivering guidance interventions (e.g. 1st year study skills, 3rd year subject choice) to year/class groups who are not formally timetabled for guidance classes.

5.4 Guidance Programmes and Levels

Curriculum Content/Guidance Syllabus and Student Support Services 1st – 6th year

Appointments and referrals are arranged with students as requested and required. There are strong links between the Guidance Counsellors and the student support services team in De La Salle College to ensure that guidance is provided to all students i.e. The Principal, Deputy Principal, Chaplain, Year Head, SPHE Co-ordinator, Tutors, and Class Teachers. The Guidance Counsellor links with parents to ensure that the emotional, educational, vocational and social needs of each student are met. Appointments are made with parents on request or through referral.

Below is a list of both Guidance specific activities and whole school/subject department activities which are in place to support the personal, social and career development of our students. This list is not exhaustive but serves to highlight the vital work departments such RE, SPHE and indeed Guidance, do to support the students in De la Salle College.

Incoming 1st Year Students

- All parents and students attending the School Open Night & Information Evening are given an **Incoming 1st Year Presentation** (see Appendix V) which includes advice regarding: Completing the Application Form, **Subject Choice** for 1st years, **Supporting the Transition** from Primary to Post-Primary school, the **Student Support system** in place in the school, the Incoming 1st Year Assessment and **organisation** tips for 1st year. All parents attend a presentation on the Junior Certificate Schools Programme (JCSP) presented by the JCSP Programme Co-ordinator.
- The **School Open Night & Information Evening** also provides an important opportunity for students to take a tour of the school facilities and learn about the school's religious ethos and school achievements and the range of option subjects available to them. Parents & students have an opportunity to visit the different Subject Rooms and are given an outline of the option subjects by the relevant subject teachers. Students choose 2 subjects between: French, German, Home Economics, Music, Woodwork, Technical Graphics and Art.
- **Incoming 1st Year Assessments** occur in late February / early March to facilitate mixed ability class groupings and to identify any educational needs which may not have been already identified. A range of assessments examining verbal, non-verbal & numerical reasoning and comprehension are administered. The results of these assessments may prompt discussion with the SEN department and NEPS.
- The Guidance Counsellor(s) calls to feeder primary schools in advance of the Open Night and Incoming 1st year Assessment and following the assessment to meet with 6th class students, teachers and management. The link between feeder primary schools and the Principal and Guidance Counsellor(s) is an important one which facilitates

- The transfer of accurate information on incoming students (Educational Passport) including standardised test scores.
- The identification of children requiring resource / learning support.
- In some cases, gaining personal information which may be pertinent to best supporting the students (e.g. recent/significant bereavement) – this information is held in the strictest confidence and on a strictly need-to-know basis, unless otherwise requested by the parents/guardians.

1st Year

- A **1st year Induction Programme** is in place, incorporating an early return for 1st year students – allowing students to familiarise themselves with the new school environment. The programme involves: meeting with their class-peers and class tutor, the school rules are discussed, timetable is explained and students are given a tour of the school (rooms associated with teachers they will have and offices/rooms to note such as the Principal’s office, Deputy Principals’ offices, Main Office/Reception, Year Head room, Staffroom, Prayer Room, Chapel, areas which are out of bounds (Brother’s living quarters), Library, Study Hall, Guidance Counsellors’ Offices, Dining Hall etc. are highlighted).
- All 1st year students have a 1st Year Journal specifically designed to support the transition to 1st year which includes information on the school history, ethos, code of behaviour, study skills, relevant procedures (e.g. if you are ill, etc.) and goal setting, etc.
- A dedicated post exists to support the transition for our students into secondary school and to support new staff also. The **1st year Mentor** plays a vital role in supporting 1st year students.

- The **Religious Programme** for 1st years which incorporates a 1st year mass at the beginning and end of the school year, 1st year Lenten Reconciliation Services and a module which explores the story of St John Baptist De La Salle.

- The **SPHE Programme** for 1st years which has a specific focus on topics such as settling into a new school environment, belonging & integration, coping with change, planning and organising your time, study techniques, making friends/friendship, self-esteem, etc. SPHE programme outline & timeline suggestions, available in the SPHE Subject Planning Box and Guidance Programme file, were created by the guidance counsellor to target SPHE topics in 1st year which were developmental in nature.

- **1st Year Study Skills Programme.** All 1st year students attend a **1st year Study Skills seminar** conducted by the guidance counsellor and year head, with a focus on study skills, target setting and time management (see Appendix VI for specific details). Students learn about simple study methods & note-taking techniques, organisation and planning for their study by creating 'to do' list's and a Study Schedule during this seminar. Study skills are also incorporated into the SPHE programme and resources are available in the SPHE Subject Box.

- 1st year students may make **individual guidance appointments or be referred to the guidance counsellor – generally by the Year Head using the Student Referral Form.** Counselling is available to all students.

- 1st year students do not have a timetabled class for guidance, however the Guidance Counsellors liaise with class teachers (e.g. SPHE teachers) to meet with 1st year class groups as needed.

- In addition, the 1st year Year Head attends the Year Head meeting with the Guidance Counsellors and Management and meets with the Guidance Counsellors informally as needed to discuss student referrals (Year Head completes a Referral Form – see Appendix III). The Guidance Counsellor works closely with the 1st Year YearHead regarding subject choice and the transition into 1st year in particular.
- The Rainbows programme is established in the school and the Guidance Counsellor and other members of the Rainbows team, including the Chaplain, meet with 1st year students to make them aware of the programme in the school.
- The School Chaplain organises the Ceannaire programme with the Transition Year students which is a ‘buddy system’ between 1st and Transition year students.

2nd Year

- **Study Skills.** Study plans and a Study Skills leaflet are available to 2nd year students. Study skills are incorporated into the SPHE programme and resources are available in the SPHE Subject Box.
- 2nd year students may make **individual guidance appointments.**
- Continuing development of self knowledge, personality, qualities and potential through SPHE and RE programmes.
- Individual guidance sessions available on request using with the Guidance Counsellor.

- Multidisciplinary approach building on 1st year topics such as Study Skills/Planning, Organisation, career journey. Encourage students to set goals to help achieve success. These skills are developed through all subject programmes.
- There is no formal class contact with the Guidance Counsellor

3rd Year

- **Study Skills.** Study plans and a specific 3rd year Study Skills leaflet are available to all 3rd year students.
- Study skills are incorporated into the SPHE programme and resources are available in the SPHE Subject Box.
- 3rd year students may make **individual guidance appointments.**
- There is no formal class contact for 3rd year students. However, a number of Guidance classes are organised with the cooperation of the SPHE and subject teachers at the time when students are making subject and programme choices and as part of a 3rd year Study Skills programme which focuses on exam technique, time management, note-taking & life balance – see Appendix VII for more details.
- 3rd year SPHE topics include: Decision making, conflict resolution, friends/peers, etc.
- Development of self concept heightening awareness of skills, interests and potential delivered within SPHE and RE classes.

- As noted above, Guidance Counsellors meet with the 3rd year class groups to discuss 5th year subject options – a presentation on the different subjects and subject implications for 3rd level courses / colleges is presented (see Appendix VIII). These Guidance classes are organised with the cooperation of the SPHE (and other subject teachers if timetable restrictions apply) teachers when students are making 5th year Programme and Subject Choice decisions. Topics specifically discussed include: matriculation, college and course specific requirements, the points system, the individual subjects available and how the Subject Choice form should be completed.
- An Information Evening for parents of 3rd year students is presented by the Guidance Counsellor and TY & LCA Co-ordinator on Senior Cycle Programme options (including Transition Year and the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme) and 5th year Subject Choice options and implications (see Appendix VIII).
- Introduction to career guidance information available on the internet Careersportal.ie and Qualifax.ie. In addition a **5th Year Options Parents information night** is held in early February; Parents are informed via text and / or email.
- Individual career appointments are available for any 3rd year students to assist with decisions re going into 5th year/TY and subject choice specifically.
- Assessments such as the Rothwell Miller, Myers Briggs, John Holland test or DATs tests are administered as appropriate.

Transition Year

- TY students have a single Careers class each week throughout TY. This class takes place in the computer room (timetable / room restrictions permitting) – see Appendix II for specific details on the Transition Year Guidance curriculum.

- The Careers module incorporates the following:
 - Introduction to Post Leaving Certificate destinations
 - Introduction to the National Framework of Qualifications
 - Using elements of the Be Real game – for the use of role play, scenarios, CV preparation, job applications.
 - **Job Search skills** which includes CV preparation (examples of CV template, action verbs, does & don'ts, etc.), writing a Cover Letter, completing an Application Form and Interview Preparation & Practice.
 - Introduction to the **World of Work**: types of work including voluntary work, relevant employment laws (e.g. legal requirements regarding working hours for secondary school students), workers rights, unions, employment trends (including an insight into the National Skills Shortages & the impact of the recession on our landscape).

 - **Careers Research** – including the use of websites such as qualifax.ie, careersportal.ie, jobs.ie, publicjobs.ie, lit.ie / job profiles to investigate and explore different careers of interest. Students will complete a Career Investigation as part of this module.

 - **Course Investigations** – including the use of websites such as qualifax.ie, individual college websites, e.g. ucc.ie with a focus on course modules, graduate profiles and entry requirements (including points trend) & learning how to read a prospectus.

 - **Subject Choice Research** – including the use of websites such as qualifax.ie and the 'Minimum Subjects Requirements' search tool, skool.ie, ex-

aminations.ie and ncca.ie to gain an understanding of different subjects at senior cycle, and careersportal.ie and individual college websites & prospectuses to gain an understanding of the subjects which would prove the most useful for future studies of interest.

Students will complete a short course or subject investigation in response to their individual needs. E.g. A student who has a lot of queries regarding what / how many science subjects to choose may investigate science subjects.

- **Work Experience Preparation** – All Transition Year students complete two one-week work experience placements. Work Experience Preparation includes discussion of work place scenarios, responsibilities to the employer/business, getting the most out of the experience, dress code, communication, organisation of their work experience, reflection on work experience, evaluation of personal performance and perceptions of the career and self-assessment.
- **Self Assessment** can include: reflection on TY modules (e.g. different subject options, Youth Leadership module) and TY experiences (e.g. work experience); use of various interest, personality and vocational assessments (paper and online) such as Careersportal.ie personality test & interest assessment, Qualifax.ie interest assessment, Rothwell Miller Interest test, John Holland interest test, etc.
- **Subject Choice:** In addition to the Subject, Career and Course research detailed above, Transition Year students receive a Subject Choice presentation which includes information on: matriculation, college and course specific requirements, the points system, the individual subjects available and how the Subject Choice form should be completed. In addition a **5th Year Options Parents information night** is held in early February; Parents are informed via text and / or email.

- Transition year students may make **individual guidance appointments**. Individual counselling / guidance meetings are available by referral or on request
- Personal Development modules in TY include pastoral care activities such as volunteering in the local retirement home.
- The Transition Year programme provides opportunities for students to explore a range of different subjects, learn about different career sectors and professions (e.g. MiniMed),
- In addition, local colleges & universities may visit the school and present on various courses, etc.
- All TY students may apply for the Mini-med programme, which is run in conjunction with the RCSI and Waterford Regional Hospital; however, there are a limited number of places for this course (generally 2 students may attend) so selection is based on a random lottery.
- Several Subject Departments organise events and curriculum topics to highlight both senior cycle topics and career areas associated with their subjects.

5th year

- There are no formal Careers classes timetabled for 5th years, however the guidance counsellor meets with students in groups or individually as needed and through the 5th year Assembly.
- 5th year students may make **individual guidance appointments** through self-referral or may be referred for a meeting with the guidance counsellor. 5th year students are asked to follow the same procedure as 6th year students and complete a Vocational Guidance Interview (VGI) form (available outside the Guidance Counsellor's office – see Appendix IX) in advance of a guidance meeting following the same procedure as for 6th year students.
- 5th year is an important time for students to develop their understanding and interest in their newly chosen option and mandatory subjects. Individual Guidance sessions will often focus on developing self awareness and assessment instruments such as the DATs test, Rothwell Miller interest test and the John Holland assessment.
- Sample **Study Plans** are available for 5th year students & located outside Ms Murphy's Guidance office.
- Individual counselling and guidance meetings available by referral and on request.
- The RE department organise several speakers each year which provide essential opportunities for personal development and reflection (see Appendix I – list of RE speakers).

- Additional speakers and seminars are organised (e.g. Study Skills) in consultation with management, 5th year Year Head, guidance counsellors and members of the pastoral care team.
- Guidance Counsellor meets with all 5th year students who are intending to apply through UCAS or other colleges abroad post-Easter of 5th year. Students are given a range of relevant information (often through email) in order to stimulate the application process in advance of the summer holidays. Students are made aware of items such as the UCAS Personal Statement and the requirement for additional assessments (e.g. UKCAT).

5th Year Leaving Certificate Applied

In addition to the above, the 5th year Leaving Certificate Applied programme incorporates the subject **Vocational Preparation and Guidance** (VPG). A minimum of one class period per week is taught by the Guidance Counsellor – see Appendix II for specific details. The VPG subject includes 4 distinct modules in 5th year and the module Guidance which continues throughout 5th & 6th year; these modules are:

- **Guidance** which incorporates self assessment regarding personality, interests and aspirations, career path planning which includes a Career Investigation on a career they are genuinely interested in. Students will research the courses available, entry requirements, positives and negatives of the profession, etc. with a focus on creating a personal career path and individual career planning over the course of the two year programme.
- **Job Search** which includes job search skills such as CV preparation, application form completion, work scenarios, cover letter writing, communication skills, researching job vacancies and application procedures including interview preparation.

- **Work Experience 1 & 2** – this module incorporates work experience preparation, planning, journaling and reflection and examines work place scenarios, responsibilities to the employer, goal setting, etc. Students complete Work Experience 1 in term 1 for a two week period and Work Experience 2 in term 2 over a two week period.
- **Enterprise 1 or 2** – students complete either Enterprise 1 or Enterprise 2, both focus on teaching students enterprise skills, with or without a profit focus, which require organisation, time management, team work, planning, etc.

In addition, 5th year Leaving Certificate Applied students complete the Vocational Preparation Task in 5th year; this task will focus on either Enterprise or Career Investigation.

6th Year

- **6th year Career guidance vocational interviews. Key Periods: Sept – Feb 1st.**
It is the responsibility of each 6th year student to organise his career guidance appointment. Students complete VGI forms (available from outside Career Guidance office) and schedule appointments with one of the school guidance counsellors when returning their forms. Students are advised of this process at the beginning of the school year – ideally in the initial 6th year Assembly in Aug. The VGI forms are stored in ‘to see’ and ‘seen’ folders as appropriate to support the administration of the vocational guidance interviews. The VGI forms are used to focus students on their career interests and past experience and achievements in advance of their careers consultation. During the individual guidance meeting, students discuss 5th year grades and set targets for individual subjects, discuss college and course options, the CAO process (receiving the CAO Information Hand out – see Appendix X), PLC courses, study abroad

options such as UCAS and study skills as appropriate. Various course / college options and career areas are discussed and additional information is often forwarded to the student via email as appropriate.

- ***UCAS. Key dates are Oct 15th & January 15th.*** Students are advised at the beginning of the academic year in 6th year & at the end of 5th year to make contact with one of the guidance counsellors to make guidance appointments as necessary. Careers consultations focus on preparation & support with students' personal statements, academic references & applications.

- ***CAO Application Process. Key Period: January. Key Dates: January 20th & February 1st.*** In addition to individual vocational guidance interviews and the CAO Information Sheet,

- 6th year students attend **7 double class sessions of Careers classes in the computer room** with the guidance counsellor focusing on the CAO process in particular Counsellor – see Appendix II for specific details; this period occurs when PE is timetabled and is kindly facilitated by the PE department. The 6th year Career Guidance programme includes:
 - Introduction to Post Leaving Certificate destinations, CAO, PLC, Waterford/Wexford Education & Training Board, etc.
 - Introduction to the Framework of Qualifications
 - Explanation of the CAO application process including practicing the 'demo' version, course search, key dates, understanding how the CAO system, offers, etc. works.
 - Exploration of the UCAS application process, course search, requirements, key dates, etc.
 - Examining the PLC application process, course search, interview preparation & practice, progression routes and key dates.

- Course Research & Career Research form an integral part of the 6th year Career Guidance programme and the use of CACG is fundamental in this regard.
 - Use of Qualifax.ie forms a key component of 6th year careers, students can investigate courses, research college open days, discover entry requirements and points trends, examine course content and graduate options.
 - Websites such as: careersportal.ie, the lit.ie jobs profiles website, gradireland.ie, public jobs.ie and jobs.ie are useful resources to assist students in their career research. Students learn how to examine job profiles, desirable qualities and mandatory experience and qualifications and reflect on this information in light of their own understanding of self.
 - Introduction to the SUSI grant application website, process and requirements – studentfinance.ie & susi.ie.
 - Introduction to the DARE & HEAR application systems – accesscollege.ie.
 - Students will learn the importance of and how to research the specific modules in courses they are interested in using the College Calendars and Book of Modules sections of various college websites; students will also investigate the assessment procedures and the mandatory and elective module options in their chosen courses.

- **Job Search skills** which includes CV preparation (examples of CV template, action verbs, does & don'ts, etc.), writing a Cover Letter, completing an Application Form and Interview Preparation & Practice are generally discussed with students on an individual basis as required.

- All 6th year students have the opportunity to attend the Waterford Institute of Technology and Waterford College of Further Education open days.

- Instruments such as the DATs test, Career Interest Inventory, John Holland test, Rothwell Miller interest test, etc. are used as required.

- Furthermore, in January both guidance counsellors facilitate after-school / lunch time sessions in the computer room for 6th year students to complete the 'demo' and the actual CAO application form prior to the January 20th 'Early bird' deadline. Students may complete PLC application forms also. Students are informed of the above via text (to parents), intercom notices to all, 6th year Assembly and the Career Guidance notice board.

- A **Parent's information evening on 6th Year Options** is held in November, with an information leaflet and presentation delivered to all in attendance. Parents are informed of the above via letter and/or text. This presentation focuses predominantly on the CAO process but also incorporates PLC courses, Apprenticeships, HEAR/DARE and Maintenance Grants for instance – see Appendix XI, XII, XIII & XIV.

- ***PLC Courses, specifically Waterford College of Further Education. Key periods: January – May.*** In addition to individual vocational guidance interviews and the 7 double period Careers classes 6th year students attend which do focus on PLC courses in a session, students interested in attending WCFE in particular attend the WCFE open day in December. Furthermore, when the WCFE applications process opens in mid – January, after-school computer sessions are facilitated for students to complete the online form; students are informed of these sessions via the Career Guidance notice board and intercom notices to all. Students may also meet with the guidance counsellor to practice their interview skills ahead of their PLC course interview via appointment. Students will receive a presentation on the PLC application process & courses through their Careers classes also – See Appendix XIII.

- **Study Skills**. Students discuss study techniques/methods and organisation during their Vocational Guidance Interview. In addition, sample study plans are made available from outside the guidance office. Furthermore, this year, a Study Skills seminar will be available for all 6th year students and is provided by another member of staff specialising in the area at a nominal cost on a Saturday morning. A specific 6th year study skills plan is available to all 6th years and is stored outside the Career Guidance office for students to access at any time.

- **Open Days**. **Key Date: 2nd Tuesday in December (typically)**. 6th year Students attend the Waterford IT and WCFE open day, held in early December (Tuesday). In addition a **list of all the college open days** are available from outside the guidance office and are shown on the guidance notice board.

- Topics such as transition from school, life choices, coping with the unexpected, support agencies, personal responsibility and motivation addressed during RE and Guidance classes.

6th Year Leaving Certificate Applied

In addition to the above, the 6th year Leaving Certificate Applied programme incorporates the subject **Vocational Preparation and Guidance (VPG)**. A minimum of one class period per week is taught by the Guidance Counsellor – see Appendix II for more details. The VPG subject includes 4 distinct modules in 5th year; these modules are:

- **Guidance** which incorporates self assessment regarding personality, interests and aspirations, career path planning which includes a Career Investigation on a career they are genuinely interested in. Students will research the courses available, entry requirements, positives and negatives of the profession, etc. The focus in 6th year LCA is on creating a personal career path and individual

career planning over the course of the two year programme; site visits to college open days will be included in this module.

- **Work Experience 3 & 4** – this module incorporates work experience preparation, planning, journaling and reflection. Students complete Work Experience 3 in term 1 for a two week period and Work Experience 4 in term 2 over a two week period. Students must complete different work experience placements in each session and should focus on refining their choice of work experience in response to and following reflection of their work experience in 5th year and their developing personal awareness.

The remaining two modules are chosen by the subject teacher and may include:

- **Community Work** which includes learning about the work of community and voluntary organisations, increase their understanding and awareness of the importance of community work and identify opportunities that would allow them to make a positive contribution to their community and participate in voluntary work.
- **Work & Living** – in this module students gain an insight into the changing nature of the world of work, develop an understanding of industrial relations, health & safety issues and equality in the work place and the impact of industry on society.
- **Enterprise 1 or 2 or 3** – students generate an enterprise with a focus on teaching students enterprise skills, with or without a profit focus, which require organisation, time management, team work, planning, etc. Forming a mini-company can be a key focus in this module, particularly Enterprise 1.

6. Differentiation, Literacy & Numeracy in Guidance.

This section is divided into:

- Differentiation in Guidance & Assessment
- Literacy in Guidance
- Numeracy in Guidance

6.1 Differentiation in Guidance

Definition: (NCCA, 2007) “ the process of varying content, activities, teaching, learning, methods and resources to take into account the range of interests, needs and experiences of individual students”

Based on the principle given by the Primary Professional Development Service ‘Differentiation in Action’, “No two children are alike”, and as such differentiated teaching and learning is key to ensuring that children have multiple options for taking in information and making sense of concepts. Heacox (2002) defines differentiation as ‘changing the pace, level, or kind of instruction you provide in response to individual learners’ needs, styles or interests’. To differentiate effectively and support individual and diverse students in the classroom, the teacher is required to be flexible in their approach in order to adjust: what the children will learn (content), how the children will learn (process) and, how they will demonstrate their learning (product). An obvious feature of the differentiated classroom is that it is ‘child centred’. Shifting the emphasis from the ‘teacher and instruction’ focus to the ‘child and learning’ focus means redefining your role as teacher. “As a teacher who differentiates instruction, you become both a facilitator and a collaborator” (Heacox, 2002).

Based on this principle differentiated teaching and learning is key to ensuring that children have multiple options for taking in information and making sense of concepts. To differentiate effectively and support individual and diverse students in

the classroom, the teacher is required to be flexible in their approach in order to adjust:

- what the children will learn (content)
- how the children will learn (process)
- how they will demonstrate their learning (product).

In order to differentiate, the teacher will:

- Break all learning tasks into small steps.
- Probe regularly to check understanding
- Provide regular quality feedback, both orally and for all written tasks
- Present information visually and verbally, using ICT, whiteboard, PowerPoint
- Use diagrams, graphics and pictures to support instruction.
- Provide independent practice (through independent research projects)
- Model what you want students to do (i.e. Using career websites such as careersportal.ie, show students how to research courses effectively)
- Clearly define and post classroom expectations for work and behaviour at start of year and reminders throughout the year
- Explicitly teach study and organisational skills
- Use Direct Instruction
- Provide simple instructions on completing tasks
- Sequence slowly, using examples
- Speak clearly and turn so students can see your face
- Allow time for students to process requests and allow them to ask questions
- Use an overhead projector with an outline of the lesson or unit of the day and explain to students
- Provide clear photocopies of notes and overhead transparencies
- Provide a detailed course outline at beginning of the year

- Keep oral instructions logical and concise and reinforce them with brief cue words
- Repeat or re-word complicated directions
- Frequently verbalise what is being written on the board
- At the end of class, summarise the important segments of each presentation
- Give assignments both in written and oral form

Other Differentiation Strategies which may be used include:

Readability: All handouts will be of A4 size, with clearly laid-out and simple language. Key words will be in BOLD print/underlined and explained fully by teacher. Images/graphs will also be included on handouts.

Choice of Activity: Use of a range of teaching and learning strategies (I.E. Teacher-talk, think pair share/group work (co operative learning), board work, PowerPoint, reflective exercises) to include whole-class, small group and individual activities.

Use of **Anchor Activities** - activities which students move on to when a task is completed. Students are given a choice of activities which they can complete on their own so that the teacher can work with small groups/individuals.

Learning Preferences: Use of ICT & other resources (Youtube clips, visual presentations, graphs) to include visual/auditory learners.

Modelling: E.g. Use of modelling when completing career/course investigations, the process will be shown by teacher and modelled by students.

Active Learning: Use of a range of active learning strategies (I.E. think pair share/group-work, assertive questioning (BLOOM'S TAXONOMY) etc). There will also be a lot of independent research to be conducted in class by the students.

Interest Groups: Students will be split during activities into a learning group composed of those interested in a specific interest (i.e. specific course sector/college)

Independent Study: Student chooses a topic of interest that he/she is curious about and wants to discover more about (i.e. worksheets on career/course investigation)

Creative Thinking: Both role-play and reflective journal exercises will be used to increase creativity and to include kinaesthetic and creative thinkers and learners.

Differentiated Assessment for Learning

Equally, a differentiated approach to Assessment is integral to a complete & thorough model of differentiation in Guidance; the Guidance Plan acknowledges this need.

- **Assessment OF Learning (AoL)**

While there is generally no formal Assessment OF Learning in 6th Year Guidance & some formal assessment in Transition year, students understanding of the skills & processes taught in Guidance classes are assessed through over-arching activities which illustrate a well-rounded understanding of both specific processes (e.g. research processes) and personal reflection (e.g. on their values, interests, aptitudes). For example, 6th year students complete sections of their work-booklet in each class and the work booklet serves to offer the students the opportunity to practice the research skills they have learned in class to careers and courses they are interested in and essentially assesses their learning in this regard. The final career & course choices made by the students serves to further illustrate making decisions which, it is hoped, are well grounded in personal reflection and deliberate negotiation & deliberation. Transition Year students complete both reflective journals (learning logs) & complete assigned tasks which are moulded to suit their personal interests and preferences, yet require the successful application of the skills & knowledge gleaned in their Guidance classes.

- **Assessment for Learning (AFL)**

Assessment for Learning is an approach that emphasises the importance of giving clear focused feedback to learners. It involves: Keeping the focus on the learning intention, talking to students about their progress towards it, getting them to talk about their progress and the progress of others and discussing success and ways of improving learning. This approach 'brings students inside the learning process. It makes learning something that they do, organise and talk= about, rather than something the teacher does for them..' (www.ncca.ie April 2007). AFL is a source of empowerment and motivation for learners and is associated with improvement in levels of achievement and a better disposition towards learning.

This approach can be implemented by:

- Sharing the learning intention with the class at the beginning of each session, i.e. WALT (We Are Learning To..), e.g. Identify a suitable university course of study.
- Following learning, giving clear focused feedback to learners in the following areas:
 - Aspects of the work that have been successful – WILF (What I am Looking For)
 - Aspects that might need to be improved on
 - How to go about making the improvements
- Self-Assessment and Peer Assessment are essential components of Assessment for Learning and will be used throughout careers classes in the Guidance program.
 - E.g. When students are practicing interview techniques (through role-play), the peer group will give verbal and written feedback on their performance (i.e. What went well, what could have been improved etc..)
- Asking good questions is essential – i.e. **Bloom's taxonomy** is a useful and time tested model for examining and differentiating the challenge levels of learning tasks and discussion questions in all subjects. It enables the teacher to

look at instruction through the lens of challenge. It includes six levels: • Knowledge • Comprehension • Application • Analysis • Evaluation • Synthesis. The use of simple high-order tasks will ensure that weak students have 'all Blooms bits'

Specific strategies used in Career Guidance classes include:

- **Traffic Light System** will be used to assess the learning progress (learning outcomes) of students and for syllabus planning so that students will acquire all key knowledge and competencies. Each student has a green, orange and red page in their student journal which will be used here.

E.g. **Green light** represents knowledge/competencies that ALL that students SHOULD attain in the year.

- For LCA₁ students, this will be creating a survey on an aspect of working life and choosing a career path of interest via a career investigation. It will also include certain keywords which will be highlighted throughout the year.
- For TY students, they will be required to know what subject options are available to them and what jobs relate to each subject. They will also be required to reflect on learning from their work experience

E.g. **Orange light** represents knowledge/competencies that MOST students WOULD attain in the year.

- For LCA₁ students, this might include knowledge of why people work and what gains can be made from employment
- For TY students, this might include knowledge of effective study techniques for themselves, in preparation for the Leaving Cert

E.g. **Red light** represents knowledge/competencies that SOME students COULD attain in the year.

- For LCA₁ students, this might include full competence on the use of career websites like Qualifax etc
 - For TY students, this might include securing an interview via completion of a job application form
- **Teacher observation** i.e Teacher will assess career areas of interest for students and make sure to keep each lesson inclusive of all student' interests with regards careers etc.
 - **Focused talk and discussion** i.e. Discussion of progression routes to third level.
 - **Questioning** i.e Bloom's Taxonomy as discussed above.
 - **Teacher designed tasks and tests** i.e All worksheets will be created by teacher in order to challenge all learners and cater for mixed ability.
 - **KWL grids** i.e What I know, What I want to Know and What I have learned – Students are actively encouraged to use KWL grids as part of their study methods also.
 - **Standardised tests** E.g. DAT's, Career Interest Inventory, Holland's Interest Test.
 - **Concept mapping** i.e. Concept mapping of suitable course choices at third level, concept mapping of college costs, etc.
 - **Questionnaires and surveys** i.e. Students will design questionnaires and surveys to investigate an area of work that interests them.
 - **Self assessment and reflection**
 - E.g. Learning Log's and career investigation worksheets from which they can assess the learning achieved by personal research either online/via prospectus.

- Students will also calculate CAO points from their mock exams and can therefore assess their level of achievement in the Leaving Certificate)
- **Think Pair Share** (E.g. Students will be asked what career areas they are interested in researching and they will then share their thoughts and interests with their peers to aid the learning experience)
- **Peer Assessment** (E.g. Peer assessment will be used when students are learning about interview techniques and preparing for job interviews. Students will provide written and verbal feedback on peers performance in a role-play scenario of a job interview)
- **Correcting Sample Answers** (E.g. Students will be presented with sample CV'S and Cover letters and will identify points of strength and weakness within them).

6.2 Literacy in Guidance

“Literacy includes the capacity to read, understand and critically appreciate various forms of communication including spoken language, printed text, broadcast media and digital media.” (DES 2011). Literacy is a whole school issue and as such involves all teachers and subjects; the Guidance plan reflects this.

As part of the Guidance department’s literacy strategy, and the whole school approach to literacy, specific lists of Key words / terms have been developed. Students will be encouraged to identify and define these key words in class and the guidance plan will incorporate pre-teaching and revision of these words. These lists (see Appendix XV) should support the whole school literacy development plan and will underline the Guidance programmes. There may be some repetition among the key words lists, this repetition is to allow for the fact that while all students will complete 1st, 2nd and 3rd

year, approximately 50% of the 3rd year student body will progress immediately to 5th year (established Leaving Certificate programme or the Leaving Certificate Applied programme). Students may be familiar with some of these words (e.g. value, experience, assessment, credit, award, etc.) but the meaning of these words may change or be given more gravitas in the context of the Guidance programme and Career planning. The definitions for these key words / terms can be found in Appendix XV.

In addition to the use/application of Key Words, students complete research assignments which requires students to read, understand and critically appreciate and appraise the information given (through various mediums including digital media) and to transfer the knowledge gleaned, their understanding of this knowledge and formulate opinions, plans and summaries in written presentations and oral communication – skills which are integral to literacy development.

6.3 Numeracy in Guidance

Numeracy complements literacy and is sometimes called ‘mathematical literacy’. Both skills are needed in order to function fully in modern life. Numeracy is the ability to reason and to apply simple numerical concepts. Basic numeracy skills consist of comprehending fundamental arithmetic, such as addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. However, numeracy is not limited to the ability to use numbers in this way. Numeracy encompasses the ability to use mathematical understanding and skills to solve problems and meet the demands of day-to-day living in complex social settings. To have this ability, a young person needs to be able to think and communicate quantitatively, to make sense of data, to have a spatial awareness, to understand patterns and sequences, and to recognise situations where mathematical reasoning can be applied to solve problems.

Thus, being numerate is as much about thinking and reasoning logically as about 'doing sums'. It means being able to: interpret data, charts and diagrams; process information; solve problems; check answers; understand and explain solutions; and make decisions based on logical thinking and reasoning. Numeracy includes promoting skills in critical thinking & problem solving skills as well using key mathematical / numeracy competencies. Bloom's Taxonomy of Critical Thinking includes several numeracy skills which form an integral part of numeracy strategy within the Guidance Programme. For instance, as part of the Career Guidance programmes, students are guided towards and given the opportunity to practice the following skills which are all part of Bloom's Taxonomy:

- Count (e.g. results, course options)
- Add (e.g. results, predicted points, target setting)
- Choose (e.g. courses which fit interests, strengths & values)
- Define (e.g. entry requirements, specific career activities & qualities)
- Identify (e.g. personal strengths, interests and values)
- Record (e.g. results, targets, courses of interest, entry requirement details)
- Organise (e.g. study schedule, revision plan, attendance at Open Days)
- Compile (e.g. a list of courses in order of preference)
- Plan (e.g. their time, study schedule, life balance)
- Assess (e.g. course details, module topics, level of interest)
- Compare (e.g. aspects of different careers, courses and modules with each other)
- Interpret (e.g. results, interest assessment, personal values Vs career interests)
- Investigate (e.g. matriculation requirements, points requirements, modules, courses, careers)
- Rank (e.g. courses in order of preference, importance of life values, career interests)
- Measure (e.g. interests, aptitudes, etc.)
- Analyse (e.g. an abundance of data on courses, careers, personal interests, qualities, values, modules)

Some specific examples of some specific tasks which facilitate the above numeracy skills and form part of the Career Guidance programmes are:

- Completion of Personality & Interest Assessments using a Likert scale to record and assess answers. Students practice ranking, choosing, measuring and later interpreting their answers.
- Interpretation of graphical data. For instance, the results of the personality test is given in the form of a pie chart. Students must assess and analyse this data and interpret this information.
- Interpretation of numerical data. For example, the results of interest assessments are given in linear data form for analysis.
- Generating individual study timetables/ schedules – students must analyse and quantify the time available for their study and plan, organise and divide this time between their different subjects.
- Students rank, assess and compile their career values and use this information to analyse the match between their values and their preferred careers.
- Students compile and add their current and predicted grades and points and compare this data with the required grades and points. Students then apply this knowledge to their study plan to assess whether additional time should be spent.
- Students research and identify the entry requirements for various courses of interest and analyse this data in terms of their specific subject details.

7. Organisation & Administration of the Guidance Service

This section can be divided into the following areas:

- Administration
- Time Allocation & Timetabling
- Record Keeping
- Protocols/procedures for meetings with parents/guardians
- Assessment Procedures / Evaluation

7.1 Administration

Counselling/Vocational/Careers Meetings

To ensure the safe and effective delivery of the guidance programme, an appointments system for Personal Counselling/Careers/Vocational Guidance Interviews operates. Students who wish to meet with one of the Guidance Counsellors for educational, social, personal, or vocational guidance/counselling may make an appointment themselves; referrals are also made by the Principal, Deputy Principals and Year Heads also. In these cases the Guidance Counsellor will liaise with class teachers in order to meet with students; the ongoing cooperation and goodwill of the teachers in De la Salle in this regard greatly supports the counselling service in particular.

With the exception of emergency situations or sudden distress, students are requested to make these appointments outside of class time so that students are not late for class etc. unless their teacher gives them permission to do so. The guidance counsellor displays a list of available times, which are outside of class time, to make appointments on the Career Guidance notice board; to reduce disruption to teachers' classes & counselling work, such times are usually on designated days at the 11 o'clock break period when the guidance counsellor is available in the office and during careers classes. Students are not allowed to excuse themselves from class to make appointments or wait

outside the Guidance Office. Students are given an appointment slip/card and are instructed to present their appointment slip/card to their class teacher, requesting permission to attend, in advance of the appointment.

All meetings are by appointment, except in the case of emergency referrals. Students make appointments during the break/lunch time (times are listed on the guidance notice board) or after guidance classes. It is the responsibility of each student to inform their teacher in advance of their appointment and to request permission to attend the appointment. Subject teachers have the right to refuse a student to attend the Guidance Counsellor if it interferes with their teaching. For instance, if a student cannot attend their appointment as there is a test scheduled for the appointment time then it is the student's responsibility to communicate this in advance to the guidance counsellor and organise an alternative time for their appointment.

Certain periods in the school year (particularly prior to UCAS & CAO deadlines: Oct 15th, Jan 15th, Jan 20th & Feb 1st) are very busy and a waiting list (at times up to 4 weeks) may be in place for appointments so it is imperative that students give the guidance counsellor advance notice in so far as possible if they are unable to attend so that their appointment time can be given to another student.

7.2 Time Allocation & Timetabling

For the school year 2015-2016, the school allocated 38 hours and 40 minutes to guidance, between two guidance counsellors, of which 6 hours and 40 minutes have been allocated to careers classes (4th & 6th year) and the remainder for career, educational, social and personal counselling. The Guidance Counsellor is a member of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC) and engages in continuous professional development and counselling supervision with the Co. Waterford branch of the IGC.

This group offers support for counselling issues that arise, is facilitated by an accredited supervisor and meets 5 times a year for 2 hrs per session. The guidance counsellor does not have classes on Tuesday afternoons to accommodate her attendance at supervision.

7.3 Record Keeping

The Guidance Counsellor operates the following record-keeping procedures.

- Detailed records of all personal counselling and careers/vocational guidance interviews are kept:
- Guidance records are kept for 7 years after the students leave school
- The detailed records of personal counselling sessions should contain some of the actual words and phrases used by the student and the student should be informed of all matters pertaining to confidentiality between the counsellor and the student.
- The Counsellor should ideally write up notes as soon as possible after the meeting to ensure accuracy and precision.
- Notes should be brief.
- Details on all appointments are recorded in the Guidance Counsellor's Year-book Diary.

7.4 Protocols/procedures for meetings with parents/guardians:

The Guidance Counsellor is available to meet with parents at the regular parent-teacher meetings for 3rd and 6th year groups. Parents are seen on a first come basis. If parents are unable to see the Guidance Counsellor during these meetings, they are invited to make an appointment for another time.

Parents are welcome to ring the school at any time to make an appointment to meet with the Guidance Counsellor. A request for a meeting will be acknowledged and will be arranged for the soonest available time

- In certain circumstances the Guidance Counsellor may need to contact the parents/guardians in order to request a meeting with them. Contact is made with the parent directly by phone to arrange a mutually convenient time for the meeting. If appropriate, the parents/guardians are informed over the phone of the reason for the meeting.

Protocol for Meetings

Parents/Guardians make appointments with the Guidance Counsellor by telephoning the school. Appointments are conducted during the school day or during the Parent Teacher meetings by arrangement. All parties are requested to inform each other if a cancellation is necessary. On occasion, the Guidance Counsellor may request another staff member e.g. class tutor, subject teacher or/and management to be present at a meeting. Meetings may be conducted over the phone also. Notes are kept of all meetings by the Guidance Counsellor.

7.5 Assessment Procedures / Evaluation

Assessment is not a feature of guidance. Informal 'assessment' in the clarification of career choice and subject choice, improved study skills and examination technique etc provide some insight into the effectiveness of the Guidance Counsellor's interventions. Students are encouraged to engage in self-reflection and to self-evaluation in terms of goal-setting and personal development.

Homework Procedures

Formal homework is not usually given. A career investigation and /or course research may follow a student's vocational guidance interview. Transition Year students complete Work Experience Diaries including Self Reflection and Career / Course / Subject Investigations.

8. Professional Standards & Duties

This section can be divided into the following areas:

- Ethical Requirements
- Counselling & Confidentiality
- Confidentiality & Testing
- In-Career Development
- Evaluation & Review

8.1 Ethical Requirements

Ethical awareness is a prerequisite for the school Guidance Counsellor. The Guidance Counsellor is obliged to operate, in policy, process and practice in an ethical manner. The Guidance Counsellor is bound by the Code of Ethics as outlined by the Institute of Guidance Counsellors (2002 – see Appendix XVI). The Guidance Counsellor's primary focus is the welfare of the student and he/she is ethically bound to act in the best interest of the student. The counsellor must act within the law and within the ethical guidelines as outlined by his/her profession. The Guidance Counsellor is expected to be competent in and mindful of the legal and ethical responsibilities of his/her work. Furthermore, the Guidance Counsellor is ethically obliged to seek out new developments in the personal, educational and vocational fields with a view to improving the overall counselling service to the student.

The Guidance Counsellor receives professional support by means of regular meetings with a trained counselling supervisor through 'Supervision' which is organised by the Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC) at a regional level and occurs five times per year. In addition, regional IGC branch meetings occur monthly and support professional development.

8.2 Counselling and Confidentiality

The Guidance & Counselling Service is a professional counselling service, which abides by a strict code of ethics and confidentiality policy as outlined by the Institute of Guidance Counsellors. Confidentiality is a central and integral part of the counselling process and is assured to each student who avails of the Counselling Service. It offers safety and privacy to those who choose to discuss personal and private concerns. The guidance counsellor takes all reasonable steps to ensure that consultation takes place in an appropriately private environment and to preserve the confidentiality of information about the student. Students should feel comfortable that conversations with the guidance counsellor are private and confidential.

However, absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed and this is explained to the student at the onset of counselling and student are reminded of this limited confidentiality. It is explained to the student that the guidance counsellor cannot guarantee confidentiality if:

- i) The life or safety of the student is in danger -
- ii) The life or safety of others is in danger
- iii) There are concerns regarding Child Protection
- iv) A crime is about to be committed

If such a situation arises where confidentiality cannot be kept, the guidance counsellor will contact the school's designated liaison person (the Principal) to seek help and safety for the student. In so far as is possible, in such cases, confidentiality is broken following discussion (and hopefully agreement) with the student and a full explanation will be given regarding the necessary procedures that may need to be taken.

8.3 Confidentiality & Testing

Psychometric Testing: Confidentiality, Feedback & Storage

- **Feedback**

Results of standardised tests administered are given to students in a confidential manner. A one to one feedback discussion is approached in such a way as to ensure in as far as possible that it is a thoroughly rewarding experience for the student. A test result will not be taken in isolation but will be viewed in context of the development of the whole individual. Feedback will be oriented towards the immediate objective of the testing e.g. what have the test results highlighted for discussion that can help the student plan their career/choose their academic route?

- **Access to test results and data held:**

Access is restricted to those with a need to know. Persons that are untrained will not be allowed access to raw data from tests but only to clearly described interpretations. Individuals do change and develop and therefore psychometric data can become less accurate over time. Tests can provide well-constructed measures of aspects of individuals at a point in time, but this does not preclude a degree of subsequent change and development. Parents on request may be given a copy of the results of the DAT (if administered) and the Guidance Counsellor will discuss the findings of the test accordingly. Procedures adhered to (in accordance with best practice guidelines: British Psychological Society) are as follows:

1. Appropriate parties who may legitimately receive test results as well as the Guidance Counsellor are: the Principal, the Deputy Principal, the Year Head, and the SEN co-ordinators. Oral reports will be given to these parties and when necessary and if requested written reports will be supplied also.
2. Class Tutors and subject teachers may, when appropriate, be given general oral qualitative descriptions but will not have access to actual test data results or to written reports of data.

- 3 Levels of confidentiality are explained to individuals and groups before tests are administered.
- 4 Data kept on file is protected so that only those who have a right of access can obtain them.
- 5 Test data will not be kept on file longer than two years after the student has completed her education in the school.

8.4 In Career Development

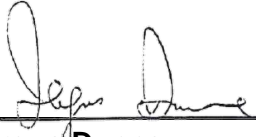
To maintain qualified membership of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors a chartered Member must complete 10 hours of in-service training annually (IGC Constitution and Code of Ethics 2004). In-Career development is essential to the work of the Guidance Counsellor. Regular attendance at local IGC meetings and Counselling Supervision is facilitated by the school through sensitive timetabling (Tuesday afternoon). The IGC AGM provides a range of in-service through the provision of workshops and presentations relevant to our work. Additional in-service is organised at local or/and at national level and is open to all registered current members of the IGC.

8.5 Evaluation & Review

Critical reflection and evaluation is a very important part of the school Guidance Programme. It is necessary to review the plan in order to measure the strengths and weaknesses of guidance within the school and to assess whether it is meeting the needs of the students. It is also important to employ strategies for a whole school approach to guidance. Subject Development and Planning hours facilitate the evaluation and review process.

In addition the Guidance Plan in its entirety will be reviewed annually.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 2nd March 2016

Signed: 

Fergus Dunne
Chairperson BOM

Signed: 

Margaret Betts
Principal