

# De la Salle College

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**Whole School Guidance Plan  
2018-2019**

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# **1. Introduction**

De la Salle College seeks to enable each student to develop his full potential. De la Salle College's Whole School Guidance Plan ('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. Thus, the Guidance Plan is student-centred in its approach.

## **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.

All staff members have a vital role to play in student care and therefore have a role to play in the delivery of the Whole School Guidance Programme.

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, and it will be evaluated, reviewed and updated routinely. 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.

Other requirements and guidelines include:

- The “Guidelines for Second-Level Schools on the Implications of Section 9(c) of the Education Act 1998, relating to students “Access to Appropriate Guidance” (DES 2005) state that ‘the school’s guidance plan is a whole school responsibility’

- Planning the School Guidance Programme National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE),2004.
- Guidelines for Second Level Schools on the Implications for Section 9 (c) of the Education Act 1998, relating to students’ access to appropriate guidance. Inspectorate, Department of Education and Skills, 2005
- Looking at Guidance, Teaching and Learning in Post-Primary Schools Inspectorate Department of Education and Skills, 2009
- Circular 0009/2012, “Staffing arrangements in Post-Primary Schools for the 2012/13 school year” restates this position: ‘each school develops collaboratively a school guidance plan as a means of supporting the needs of its students.’ It is against this backdrop and in the context of the decision in Budget 2012 to withdraw the provision for ex-quota guidance hours to schools that this whole school guidance plan was originally prepared supported by ‘The Framework for Considering Provision of Guidance Post-Primary Schools’ issued in 2012 by ACCS, ETBI, JMB and NAPD.
- Circular Letter 0010/2017 Approved Allocation of Teaching Posts 2017/18 School Year (DES, 2017a) provides a separate guidance allocation to schools by reducing the Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR). Since 2016 Guidance has been gradually restored by way of a change to the PTR. In De la Salle College guidance provision has been restored gradually in that time.  
Circular 0011/2017, states that through this circular the Minister “requires schools to adjust their Guidance Plans to meet Action 9.1 in **Action Plan for Education 2017**, which states that the Guidance Plan should ‘include specified time allocation for guidance counsellors to be available for one-to-one guidance counselling and time allocation for the role in supporting the organisation and work of the Student Support Team”
- NCGE, 2017, A Whole School Guidance Framework
- Circular Letter 0015/2017 Arrangements for the Implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle with particular reference to school years 2017/18 and 2018/19 (DES, 2017d) highlights that Wellbeing, a new area of learning
- ‘A Whole School Guidance Framework’ issued in 2017 by the NCGE which supports schools in the planning and provision of a whole school approach to guidance.

Guidance is a whole school activity and is 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 Whole School Guidance Plan**

The Whole School Guidance Plan provides an essential framework for the delivery of our school's Guidance programme. Successful planning ensures a structured response to the educational, vocational and personal and social development of the students. This Guidance plan has evolved for the purpose of providing guidance to students. It outlines the school's approach to guidance generally and explains how students are supported and assisted in making choices and successful transitions in the personal and social, educational and career areas. 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. Guidance is a whole school activity and our approach is collaboratively developed through the Whole School Guidance Team and regular consultation & liaison with personnel such as the Principal, Deputy Principals, Year Heads, members of the Student Support Team, Programme Coordinators, School Chaplain, SEN Coordinator, 1<sup>st</sup> Year Mentor, Wellbeing facilitator, SPHE/RSE teachers, RE teachers, teachers, SNAs & ancillary staff. The Whole School Guidance team includes members of senior management, the Student Support team, SEN co-ordinator, 1<sup>st</sup> year mentor, Well-being facilitator, Chaplain and subject teachers.

### **2.1 Aims and Objectives**

The Whole School Guidance Plan aims to:

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

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

- To clarify educational, social and career goals
- To address personal issues

- To identify and explore opportunities
- To grow in independence and take responsibility for themselves
- To make informed choices about their lives and follow through on these choices
- To support the development of every student
- To acknowledge and support each person's role in the school community
- To provide an environment where each individual can develop self-esteem and a sense of personal responsibility
- To provide an environment where each individual can develop a place in society and a responsibility to society
- To nurture teaching and learning so that each individual can reach his or her full potential
- To monitor the well-being of all students
- To apply best practice in the protection of students and the promotion of their welfare, within the resources available in accordance with DES and School Child Protection Policy
- To work effectively with statutory authorities and outside agencies as and when required
- To ensure that any allegations of abuse are dealt with justly and promptly in accordance with the Children First Guidelines 2017

## **2.2 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.

## 2.3 The Model of Provision

### *A Continuum of Support*

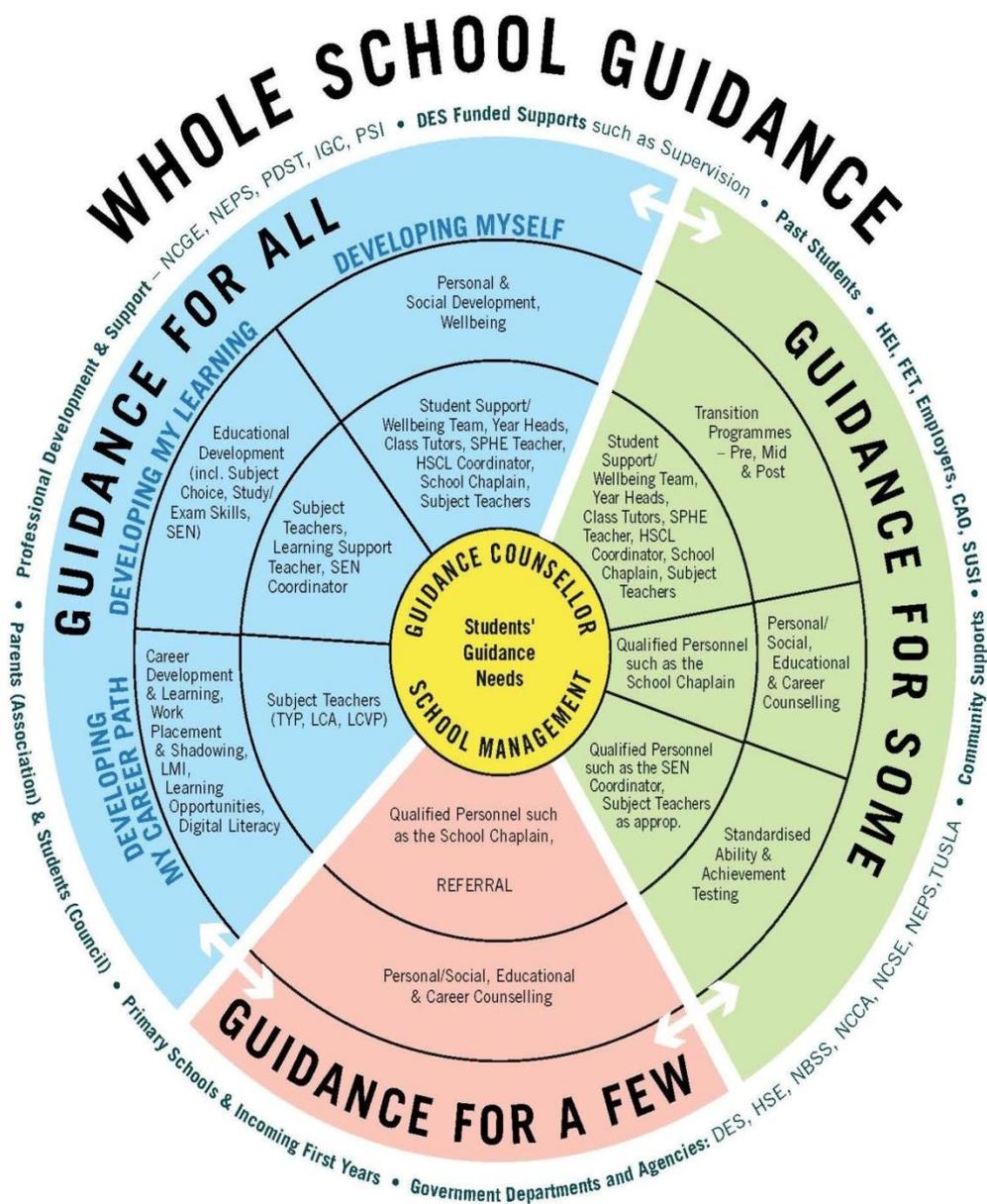
A continuum of support model is applied to the De la Salle College guidance programme. In applying the continuum, our whole school guidance programme aims to meet the needs of students along a varied range, from a whole school approach to group and individualised approaches. The continuum model can be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



(adapted from NCGE: A Whole School Guidance Framework)

The figure below (courtesy of NCGE: A Whole School Guidance Framework, p14) illustrates the continuum of support model on which our school approach to guidance is offered. The guidance counsellors in collaboration with school management and staff, and external organisations / personnel, deliver a wide range of activities & learning to support students' personal & social, educational & career development. The guidance counsellors, as specialists, play a central role in the design & delivery of the whole school guidance programme.

Excerpt from - 'NCGE: A Whole School Guidance Framework' © National Centre for Guidance in Education 2017.



## Areas of Learning & Competencies

Guidance-related learning builds on children's holistic education which starts in early childhood education and continues through their primary education under four themes: Wellbeing; Identity & Belonging; Communicating; & Exploring & Thinking. Three areas of learning to facilitate post-primary students' development in eight areas of competence throughout their post-primary education are presented in Figure 2 below. The areas of learning aim to build on the learning that children will have experienced during their years in primary education. These outcomes relate to the development of self-awareness and self-knowledge, knowledge of learning and work opportunities, and applying this knowledge to make effective transitions and decision making (see diagram below).



## Junior Cycle

The three areas of learning and associated competences are associated with the Principles underpinning the *Framework for Junior Cycle*, a number of the *Framework Statements of Learning and Key Skills*. The whole school guidance programme is linked to *Key Skills* such as *Managing Myself*, *Managing Information & Thinking*, *Staying Well*, *Communicating and Working With Others*. Guidance-related learning activities are

planned, co-ordinated and delivered with a focus on these skills & the Wellbeing competencies & indicators at three levels - Guidance For All, & more intensive interventions to those students who need it through Guidance For Some and A Few approaches.

### *Wellbeing*

There is considerable overlap between the competences and associated learning outcomes presented under *Developing Myself*, *Developing My Learning* and *Developing My Career Path* and the Wellbeing programme in Junior Cycle (SPHE and guidance related learning are two of the main pillars of Wellbeing). Wellbeing is linked to the *Staying Well* key skill of the *Framework for Junior Cycle* (NCCA, 2017; pg. 22). The eight competences can be linked with five of the six indicators of *Wellbeing – Responsible, Connected, Resilient, Respected and Aware* (presented on page 45 of the Wellbeing Guidelines). The Guidance Plan for De la Salle College is regularly reviewed to ensure planning & practice support the learning outcomes associated with Wellbeing indicators.

### *Senior Cycle*

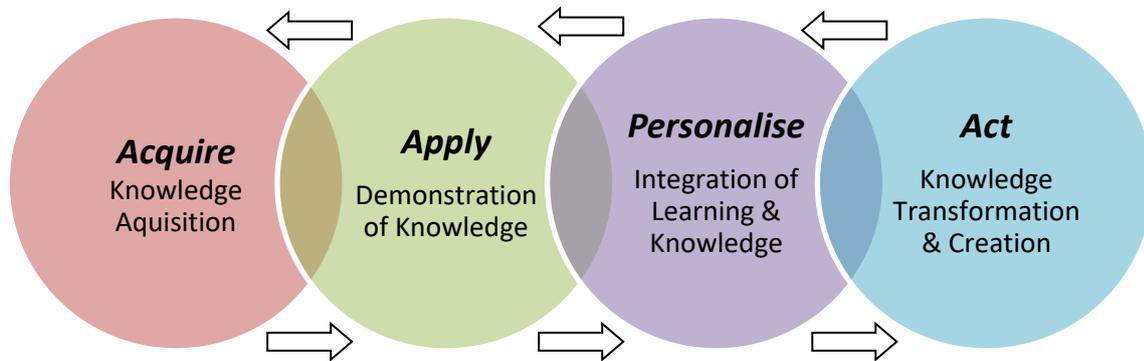
At senior cycle (including LC, LCA & TY), the SPHE/RSE, Wellbeing, RE and Guidance programmes all facilitate *Developing Myself* learning outcomes for students.

### *Four-Stage Continuum of Learning*

Outcomes presented in the table for each of the eight competences can be organised under a four-stage continuum of learning (see Figure). It is important to note that students may not progress through all four-stages of the continuum nor do so in a linear fashion i.e. students will start at different points, progress at different stages and may need to revisit earlier stages throughout their five/six years in post-primary schools. Progression will depend on individual characteristics and circumstances such as

motivation, environmental factors, prior knowledge and attitudes. On-going review of the Guidance plan, current practice and the student cohort is essential to supporting the continuum of learning in De la Salle College.

*Figure: Four-Stage Continuum of Learning*



### **3. What is Guidance?**

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)

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:

- ✓ Personal and Social Education / Development
- ✓ Educational Guidance
- ✓ 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 a) the guidance and counselling

service available to them; b) the members of the Student Support Team & c) the varied & comprehensive 1<sup>st</sup> year induction programme & buddy system, initially through a presentation delivered by the guidance counsellor to students & parents on the School Open Night, and through visits to primary schools by the guidance counsellor(s) and the 1<sup>st</sup> 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 class tutor and Year Head 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, teaching, support & administration personnel from a number of departments who may collaborate and liaise with pupils (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 Student Support Team / assigned guidance counsellor / Chaplain 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 to 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, 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 or Pieta House for 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 and as such is a whole school activity. 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 1<sup>st</sup> year student application forms (which include information on recent assessments, etc.) are used to: generate mixed ability class groupings; to identify students who may be best supported by the Junior Certificate Schools Programme; and to identify students who may need support from or referral to the SEN department. The Guidance Counsellor will liaise with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator 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 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> year students, 3<sup>rd</sup>, TY, and 6<sup>th</sup> 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)

### **3.1 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.

### **3.2 Guidance: A Whole School Activity - Roles & Responsibilities**

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

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, tutors & subject Teachers, Subject and Programme Co-ordinators (e.g. RE, SPHE, JCSP, TY, LCA), School Chaplain, SEN Co-ordinator, Resource Teachers, Learning Support Teachers, Wellbeing Facilitator, 1<sup>st</sup> year Mentor, 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.

A Whole School Approach thus ensures that our school maximises its resources for guidance through the identification of roles and responsibilities for school management and staff in the provision of appropriate guidance to students. The main roles & responsibilities with our school are:



For instance:

- **Guidance Counsellors** because of their specialist training have a professional role in each of the main areas of guidance: personal and social, educational, and career. Within personal and social their role for example may involve publicising to the students and at parents' meetings the work of the Guidance Counsellor. Their educational role involves many aspects such as liaising with the SEN co-ordinator in relation to incoming students prior to the student's entry to the school or liaising with management, year heads, and class teachers, subject teachers etc. concerning pupils who require intervention or offering those pupils counselling with regard to

study techniques, educational planning and personal organisation. Their career role may involve addressing all students in 3rd Year and Transition Year prior to them choosing their subjects for the Leaving Certificate. The Guidance Counsellor will also address a meeting of parents on the same topic. In addition the guidance counsellor has a key role in collaborating with school management in the development and review of the school Guidance plan and the integration of guidance into the curriculum. The Guidance Counsellor works collaboratively with all staff members and management. They meet regularly with the principal, deputy principal and chaplain. The guidance counsellor has strong links with outside supportive agencies and is a member of the student support and critical incident teams. The Guidance counsellor is involved in delivering central aspects of the LCA & TY programme such as work experience preparation and career investigation. They are on the planning team for the T.Y. and LCA programmes.

- ***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 Counsellors communicate regularly with the Principal and Deputy Principals, and attend a weekly meeting with the Principal, Deputy Principal, Chaplain TY & LCA Programme Co-ordinator & 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 (e.g. to the Student Support Team / Guidance Counsellor or Chaplain) where necessary.

The **Principal** oversees the Whole School Programme of which Guidance Counselling is an important component. The Principal controls the internal organization and management of the school, and exercises supervision over the teaching and non-teaching staff. 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. The Deputy Principals are in charge of the school in the absence of the Principal.

- 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. The Chaplain is a member of the Student Support and

Critical Incident teams. The Chaplain has a specific mission toward the spiritual, pastoral care and faith development of the entire school community.

- **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 are offered for work experience – both formally through class contact and informally. The role of the JSCP / 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. The subject teacher is the key in helping students to achieve their full potential and assists in identifying students and giving support. Subject teachers have a key role in providing support to students and information and advice relating to their subject disciplines and related careers. Some teachers have additional formal responsibilities through management, pastoral care roles, coordination roles and through participation in programmes such as SPHE. Furthermore, 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 or Year Head 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. As a matter of course the Principal or Year Head must be informed by the Guidance Counsellor of referrals as appropriate.

- **Parents/Guardians** 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. The Plan recognizes that parents play a pivotal role in developing, promoting and supporting the growth of their child both at home and within the school. Parents play a vital role in shaping their children's attitude to school. A supportive home environment shapes attitudes that promote the holistic development of the child. 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 guidance counsellor & other school staff
  2. Attendance at relevant information and other meetings at school
  3. Contributing to the development and review of the school guidance plan when possible

**Students** are the focus of the school guidance programme. Students (through the student council and formal & informal consultation with students in Guidance classes and one-to-one guidance consultations) are encouraged to identify and establish needs and priorities of the guidance programme. Students are a valuable resource in the classroom and through classroom discussion, vocational preparation and personal development topics are developed and reinforced. Students will often self-refer for counselling or consult with the guidance counsellor when concerned

about a peer. Fellow students also have a part to play in supporting their peers in difficulty.

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

- The **Student Support Team** is made up of the Senior Management team, Chaplain, Guidance Counsellors, SEN Coordinator and other representatives from the staff body. The Team meet regularly to review the needs of students (timetabled). This is a forum for sharing information and concerns in a safe and confidential setting. What is discussed at Student Support Team Meetings relating to individual cases is confidential to the team and any follow up required is decided upon and assigned to a member of the team.
- The **SEN Coordinator** directs the provision and application of resources for students with special educational needs and/or specific learning difficulties. They liaise with the senior management team and all staff, parents/guardians and outside agencies. They apply for resources including resource hours, special needs assistants and assistive technology. The SEN coordinator liaises with special needs assistants, Guidance counsellors, Chaplain, Year heads, subject teachers and the senior management team.
- The **Whole School Guidance Team** is made up of the senior management team, chaplain, guidance counsellors, Wellbeing co-ordinator, 1<sup>st</sup> year mentor, SEN Co-ordinator and other representatives from the student support team and staff body. The purpose of the **Whole School Guidance Team** is to assess the guidance needs of

students (through consultation with staff, students and parents) and collaboratively formulate and review whole school guidance, at junior & senior cycle in the college.

- 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 (e.g. Lunch time speakers). 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) & events (e.g. Try Nursing, Try Business, Computer Camp) and participation in our lunch time speakers season & open days.

### 3.3 Overview of Key Personnel involved in the provision of Guidance

- Board of Management
- Principal : Ms Margaret Betts
- Deputy Principals: Mr Thomas Bourke, Ms Eileen Doolan & Mr Declan O'Brien.
- Year Heads: Ms Carolyn Ahern, Mr Declan Costello, Ms Ailbhe Conway, Mr Ray Daly & Mr Enda O'Doherty.
- LCA, TY & JCSP Co-ordinator: Ms Julieann Cantwell
- Assistant Year Heads, which includes a designated role regarding supporting the Transition from Primary to Post-Primary School – the 1<sup>st</sup> year Mentor, Ms Noreen Hanratty & Wellbeing Facilitator, Ms Geraldine McManus.

- Guidance Counsellors: Ms Sinead Murphy & Ms Emer O Keeffe
- School Chaplain: Mr Dermot Dooley
- Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator: Ms Catherine Fogarty
- Class tutors
- Subject Teachers – in particular RE and SPHE teachers
- Ancillary staff, particularly Main Office/Reception staff

## **4. Relevant Policies & Programmes**

### **4.1 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 and intersects and interlinks with several policies including:

Religious Education Policy

Chaplaincy Policy

Data Protection Policy & Procedures

Records Retention Schedule Policy

Encryption Policy

Password Policy

Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) Policy

Leave Policy

Wellbeing Policy

Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment & Safeguarding Statement

CCTV Policy

Critical Incident Policy

Dignity at Work Policy

Vetting Policy

Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

Admissions Policy

Child Protection Policy

Safety Statement

Fundraising Policy

TY Policy

LCA Policy

Social Media Guidelines & Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)

Child Protection Policy

Assessment Policy

RSE Policy

Code of Behaviour

Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy

Anti-Bullying Policy

Pastoral Care Policy

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)

## **4.2 Existing Programmes & Structures**

Existing programmes & structures that support the achievement of the aims of the school guidance plan include (the list is not exhaustive):

Pastoral Care System

Year Head Structure & Referral system

Social, Personal and Health Education

Relationships and Sexuality Education

Religious Education

Civic, Social and Political Education

First Year Induction Programme

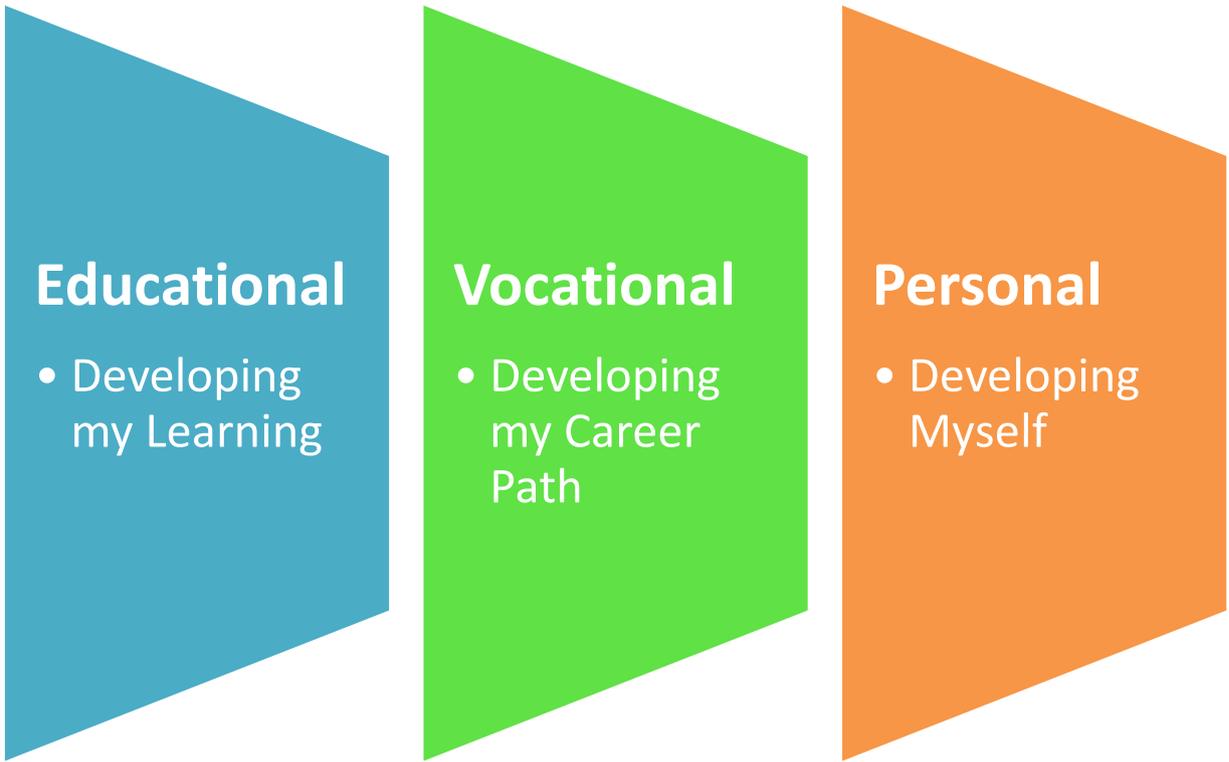
Subject Choice Programme for Senior Cycle

Transition Year Programme

Leaving Certificate Applied Programme

## **5. Current Whole School Guidance Programme & Provision**

Guidance is a whole school activity in De la Salle College. The following diagrams illustrate the continuum of support model on which our whole school approach to guidance is offered & provides examples of the wide and varied range of activities & initiatives which are provided to support students in their vocational, educational, personal & social development across three main areas of learning: *Developing Myself; Developing My Learning; & Developing My Career Path*. The guidance counsellors in collaboration with school management and staff, and external organisations / personnel, deliver a wide range of activities & learning to support students' personal & social, educational & career development. The following diagrams reflect the community initiative and community of cooperation adopted by De la Salle College in the provision of whole school guidance & illustrate a sample, non exhaustive list of whole school guidance activities.



*Educational Guidance*

**Guidance  
for All**

- 1st Year IMTA Maths Competition
- Maths Week
- Science Week
- 6th Yr English Theatre Trip
- JCPA OAL Assembly (all 1st-3rd yrs)
- Assemblies
- Study Skills Programmes
- Subject Choice Programme
- Youth Leadership
- GAA Future Leaders
- 6th Yr Career Guidance
- Year Head system & Pastoral Care system
- Field trips
- Seachtain na Gaeilge (Poster Competitions, Trad session)

**Guidance  
for Some**

- TY Law / Matrix/ First Aid Workshop
- German Breakfast      German Exchange      German Film
- History Trips (e.g. Waterford Medieval Museum & Bishops Palace, Wexford)      History Film
- Junior Cycle Film / Play Production      TED Talks
- Speeches/Debating/Oral Poetry
- 1st yr French Breakfast      French Film
- Crepe Making workshop
- TY Science Trips      6th Yr Ecology trip
- Homework Club      TY Sports Leadership Prog
- Science Week projects      Art trips & Film appreciation
- 6th yr English Shakespeare Theatre trip
- Transition year Programme      LCA Programme
- SEN referral      GC Referral

**Guidance  
for Few**

- Maths Olympiad
- Home School Liaison / Chaplain
- Learning Support
- Resource
- Junk Couture
- Homework Club 2nd Yr Academic & Social Mentoring
- Young Scientist
- Senior Science Quiz
- Student Support Team

## *Vocational Guidance*

**Guidance  
for All**

- Lunch Time Careers Speakers (Access to All)
- Religion Retreats (all 1st, 3rd & 5th yrs)
- All Night Soccer Fundraising Event
- Christmas Carol Service
- Mission Week
- TY/3rd yr Science re subject choice
- Subject Choice programme
- De la Salle Day
- LCA Tasks
- CSPE Social Responsibility projects
- 6th yr Career Guidance

**Guidance  
for Some**

- LCA Interview Preparation
- Guidance Referral
- Lunch Time Careers Speakers    Afterschool/Midterm/Night study
- Higher Options Careers Fair / Open Days
- Subject specific Careers events organised by subject teachers (e.g. Accounting, Science, IT, Maths, English, History, Art)
- Enterprise projects
- UCC 5th yr Chemistry trip
- Preparation for Work Experience

**Guidance  
for Few**

- Mini-Med
- WIT Computer Camp
- Try Business
- Try Sports
- Try Nursing
- WIT Reach Programme & Library Initiative
- Green Schools Committee
- Junk Couture
- Subject teacher advice re subject choice & related courses
- De La Salle's Got Talent

***Personal & Social Guidance***

Guidance  
for All

- Internet Safety & Reliance Talks
- Beat the Blues
- RE Speakers (e.g. Aware)
- RE Retreats (voluntary attendance)
- Animation team: Christmas Jumper Day
- 1st year Induction
- Buddy Programme
- TY St Patricks weekly placement
- All Night Soccer
- Huge variety of extra curricular activities
- Seachtain na Gaelige (Poster Competitions, Trad session)

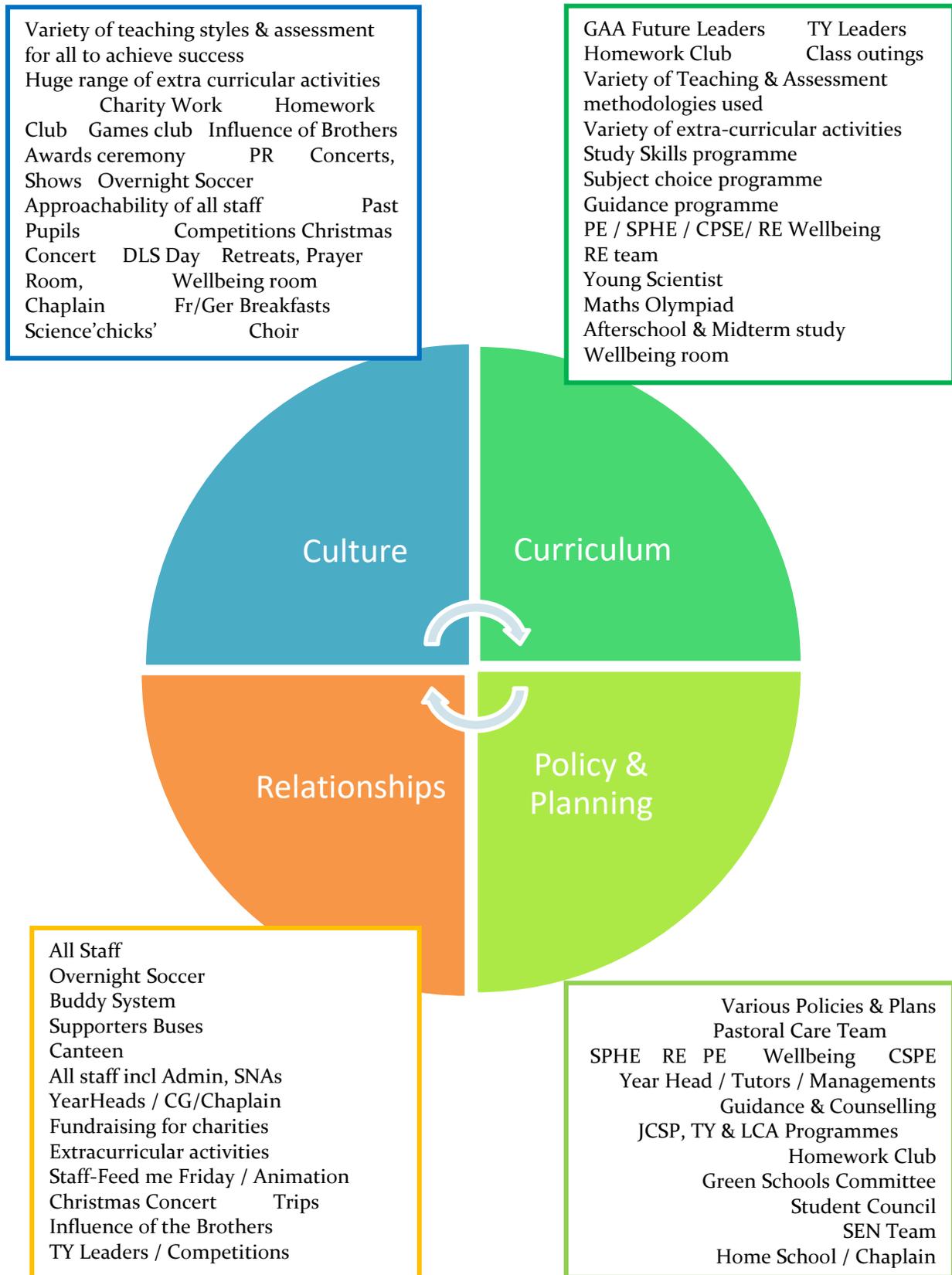
Guidance  
for Some

- Choir
- Extra-curricular activities (e.g. Basketball      Golf      Ultimate Frisbee      Hurling      Soccer      Gaelic Football)
- School Show      John Paul II Awards
- Gaisce Programme      Alpha - Faith & Personal Development
- John Paul II Awards      Wellbeing TY
- YSI      TY Programme
- German Exchange      LCA Programme
- French Trip      School Library
- English Presentation Skills
- St Vincent de Paul Shoe box & Christmas Hamper Appeal
- RE relaxation & meditation 1st - 6th yr
- Guidance Counsellor referral
- End of year trips with tutor class
- Chaplaincy      Awards Night

Guidance  
for Few

- Green Schools Committee      Library
- St Vincent de Paul      Chess Club
- Student Council      BT Young Scientist
- Home School Liaison      Maths Olympiad
- Counselling      TY La Sallian Leaders
- 2nd yr mentoring
- Games Club      CSPE St Vincet de Paul projects
- References for Students for Third Level Colleges
- Senior Debating - Transition Year, 5th & 6th years
- De la Salle's Got Talent

Sample of Whole School Guidance Activities (this list is not exhaustive, but has been generated though whole staff) in De la Salle College in the areas of the Culture, Curriculum, Planning & Policy & Relationships:



## **6. Guidance Activities & Procedures**

Guidance and Counselling support is offered on an individual, small group or class group basis. 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.

### **6.1 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.

## **6.2 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, internet safety & resilience talks, De la Salle awards) – see Appendix for RE speakers. Developmental Programmes include programme options such as the Transition Year programme, Leaving Certificate Applied programme and Vocational Preparation activities:

### *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 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

### **6.3 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 (*Senior Cycle Subject Information sheets* are available on our school website) but also by outside bodies or individuals (e.g. 'Lunch time Careers speakers', guest speakers organised by subject departments / teachers, RE Speakers, etc. – careers, social, personal) and through the guidance service via the Guidance Notice Boards,

school intercom daily notices, Guidance website, Google classroom, Guidance online calendar & Guidance *Twitter* account which are all updated regularly.

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, are useful in this work. The guidance counsellor also regularly makes presentations to parents and students on a range of guidance topics (e.g. 1<sup>st</sup> year Study skills, 5<sup>th</sup> year Subject Choice, 6<sup>th</sup> Year CAO Process).

## **6.4 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***

The Guidance Counsellor links with parents to ensure that the emotional, educational, vocational and social needs of each student are met. 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.

## **6.5 Referral Services (Personal/Social)**

Referrals cover 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) 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 (updated on the first day of term) and a copy is given to each Year – Head, Programme Co-ordinator, SEN Co-ordinator, 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.

## **6.6 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 for a list of DES approved psychometric tests for Guidance). Information from these sources, supplemented by school records and public examination results and discussion with the student 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 the results of performance tests. Student files are stored securely in the Main Office and on the VS-ware 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 5<sup>th</sup> year subject choice, where necessary. 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 3<sup>rd</sup> year, Transition year, Leaving Certificate Applied & 6<sup>th</sup> 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.
  
- ***Students with SEN:*** The Inspectorate's Looking at Guidance (2009) stresses the 'vital role' that guidance counsellors play in ensuring that 'good assessment and test information is available to inform decisions about students' learning and about the choices and decisions that they and others make about their lives'. Children with special needs may require more help to cope with aspects of school and the transition to 3<sup>rd</sup> level or world of work. Teachers, Special Needs coordinator, Chaplain and the Guidance Counsellor will liaise with parents, support services and disability/Access Officers etc. to best assist these students. Within De la Salle College testing and assessment is administered by the SEN department and the Guidance counsellor. The School has a separate SEN Policy & Assessment Policy that guides the process.

### ***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.

#### *Assessment during 3<sup>rd</sup> Year*

As part of the Study Skills & Subject Choice programme for 3<sup>rd</sup> years, there will be a focus on developing students' self-awareness with assessments of learning styles & career interests incorporated, in order to support students with both their study skills and senior cycle subject choice.

#### *Assessment during Transition Year*

As part of the Careers module in Transition Year, the first half term (Sept-Nov) are focused specifically on developing students self-awareness, with assessments of personality, interests, intelligences, values, etc. in conjunction with detailed presentations on personality, interests, values, skills, etc. Where access to the computer room is available for Careers classes, the careersportal.ie website will be used to support these assessments. The purpose of these assessments is to help students to gather & process information about themselves, in order to help them make decisions based on a good self-understanding of their behaviours and motivators. It also helps assess those attributes in the search for suitable 5<sup>th</sup> year subject choice & a successful and fulfilling career.

#### *Assessment during Sixth Year*

Leaving Certificate students use the Careers Portal website which has vast resources in relation to pursuing college courses and future careers. As students have access to computers in every Guidance class these tests are carried out online. Students are encouraged to create an online account to save all their findings to use for future research. These tests include: ● Interest-based tests to see what level of interest a student would have in a particular career or course. ● Personality tests which allow the students to gain more self-knowledge. ● Career Values questionnaires in order for students to work what is important to them in relation to their future.

## 6.7 Student Support Team

A **Student Support Team** is 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.

Student Support Team Meetings are timetabled for one period weekly and referrals are usually made through the Year Head meeting (also timetabled weekly). Personnel attending the Student Support Meeting will be varied depending on the student referred for a Student support meeting... E.g. The relevant Year Head, Senior Management Team, SEN Co-ordinator, Guidance Counsellors, Chaplain/Home School Liaison, relevant teachers as applicable/required.

The NEPS Group Consultation format is used to facilitate the structure of the meeting and for note-taking purposes. Copies of notes are stored securely by Senior Management in a secure cabinet in a locked office.

## 6.8 Subject Choice & Change Process

## *Subject Choice at Junior Cycle*

First year students study the following subjects: Irish (unless exempt), English, Maths, Science, History, Geography, Business, CSPE, RE, SPHE & PE and two additional 'choice subjects'. The Open Night is used as a valuable opportunity to showcase the variety of choice subjects on offer. On the Incoming First Year open night, parents and students are given a presentation in the College Chapel on Students Support structures, the Incoming assessment & on the Subject Choice process & decision making, as well as the third language requirement for some courses in some colleges. Each subject department presents their subject to parents during an extensive tour of the school and subject room facilities. The choice subjects on offer in De la Salle College are: Music, Art, French, German, Technical Graphics, Woodwork & Home Economics. All core & choice subjects may be continued to Leaving Certificate level.

## *Subject Choice at Senior Cycle*

In 3<sup>rd</sup> year students pick their senior cycle programme of choice (Transition year, Established Leaving Certificate or Leaving Certificate Applied programme). Students progressing directly into 5<sup>th</sup> year will also pick their choice subjects at this time. At the same time Transition year students pick their choice subjects for 5<sup>th</sup> year.

Students take the core subjects of Irish (unless exempt), English & Maths and four 'choice' subjects from a choice of 17 choice options. Current choice subjects include: French, German, Geography, History, Home Economics, Business, Economics, Accounting, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Agricultural Science, Art, Music, Applied Maths, Design & Communication Graphics & Construction Studies.

The 5<sup>th</sup> year timetable is created based on their choices, in order to ensure that the largest possible number of students obtain their top four choices. Students submit their choices in order of preference (1-5) and study 4 subjects. Typically, the majority of students are given a place on their top 4 choices. While every effort is made to

accommodate student's preferences, due to limited resources, this may not always be possible.

### *Changing Subject or Level*

All senior cycle students who change a subject or subject level must get a subject/subject level change form from their Year Head and this form must be signed, following consultation & discussion by their parent/guardian, the student, their Year Head and the Guidance Counsellor.

## **7. Guidance Curriculum**

The Guidance curriculum may be divided into two components:

- Formal Guidance
- Informal Guidance

## 7.1 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 for more details.

## 7.2 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.

## 7.3 Method of Delivery of Guidance Programme

Formal Guidance classes are timetabled for transition year (one period per week) and sixth year students (7 double periods – 14classes on a 7 week rotation); a Guidance module is also delivered to both 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year LCA class groups as part of the Vocational Preparation & Guidance subject timetable. In addition, the guidance counsellor liaises with subject teachers, particularly SPHE teachers, when delivering whole class guidance interventions (e.g. 1<sup>st</sup> year study skills & induction, 2<sup>nd</sup> year study skills & careers exploration, 3<sup>rd</sup> year study skills & subject choice, 5<sup>th</sup> year study skills & careers exploration) to year/class groups who are not formally timetabled for guidance classes.

## 7.4 Guidance Programmes and Levels

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

The School vision is to supply an effective and comprehensive Guidance service which enables our students to acquire knowledge and develop competencies for future careers, to broaden their horizons and to strive to be successful on their pathways in life. The programme aims to address the needs of all students within the school community. The following 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 as RE, SPHE and indeed Guidance, do to support the students in De la Salle College.

### *Incoming 1<sup>st</sup> Year Students*

- All parents and students attending the School Open Night & Information Evening are given an **Incoming 1<sup>st</sup> Year Presentation** (see Appendix) which includes advice regarding: Completing the Application Form, **Subject Choice** for 1<sup>st</sup> years, **Supporting the Transition** from Primary to Post-Primary school, the **Student Support system** in place in the school, the Incoming 1<sup>st</sup> Year Assessment and **organisation** tips for 1<sup>st</sup> year.
- 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> year Assessment and following the assessment to meet with 6<sup>th</sup> 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.
- Information & informative guides & links to supports parents and students in the transition to post-primary school and junior cycle subject choice are on the school guidance website.

### *1<sup>st</sup> Year*

- A **1<sup>st</sup> year Induction Programme** is in place, incorporating an early return for 1<sup>st</sup> year students – allowing students to familiarise themselves with the new school environment. First Year Induction occurs on the first day of term. Students meet with all members of Management, the 1<sup>st</sup> Year Year Head, 1<sup>st</sup> year Mentor, Class Tutor & their assigned ‘Buddies’ in the morning and take a tour of the school in small groups 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).. Lockers are allocated, journals are distributed and the school Code of Conduct is explained.

- All 1<sup>st</sup> year students have a **1<sup>st</sup> Year Journal** specifically designed to support the transition to 1<sup>st</sup> 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 **1<sup>st</sup> year Mentor** plays a vital role in supporting 1<sup>st</sup> year students.
- **1<sup>st</sup> Year Buddy programme:** Towards the end of the final term, 3<sup>rd</sup> year students, who are incoming Transition year students are asked to volunteer to apply to be TY Buddies to incoming 1<sup>st</sup> year students. All volunteers are interviewed (e.g. by the Deputy Principal or TY Buddy programme co-ordinators). The Guidance Counsellors liaise with the Buddy programme co-ordinators to provide support material for the TY Buddies (e.g. 1<sup>st</sup> year Settling In / Induction booklet programme produced by guidance counsellors).
- The **Religious Programme** for 1<sup>st</sup> years which incorporates a 1<sup>st</sup> year mass at the beginning and end of the school year, 1<sup>st</sup> year Lenten Reconciliation Services and a module which explores the story of St John Baptist De La Salle.
- The **SPHE Programme** for 1<sup>st</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> year which were developmental in nature.

- **1<sup>st</sup> Year Settling in & Study Skills Programme.** All 1<sup>st</sup> year students participate in the **1<sup>st</sup> year Study Skills** programme, conducted by the guidance counsellors and year head, with a focus on study skills, target setting and time management (see Appendix). 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.
  
- 1<sup>st</sup> 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.
  
- 1<sup>st</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> year class groups as needed & through the 1<sup>st</sup> Year Guidance programme (e.g. study skills & settling in workshops).
  
- In addition, the 1<sup>st</sup> 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 – paper or online version available). The Guidance Counsellor works closely with the 1<sup>st</sup> Year Year Head & 1<sup>st</sup> Year Mentor regarding subject choice change (where relevant) and the transition into 1<sup>st</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> year students to make them aware of the programme in the school and organise the programme on a needs basis.
- The School Chaplain organises the Ceannaire programme with the Transition Year students which is a 'buddy system' between 1<sup>st</sup> and Transition year students.
- All classes have one class period of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) / Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) per week.
- All classes have a double period of Physical Education (PE) per week.
- All classes have one class period of Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE) per week.
- All students have three periods of Religion per week.
- Students are encouraged to become active members of the school community through the extensive range of extracurricular activities.
- Parent teacher meetings for first year students are scheduled.
- Learning or emotional issues which arise are dealt with through the School Pastoral Care System; which includes teachers, year heads, the Chaplain, the Guidance Counsellors and the SEN Department. Students of significant concern may be referred for a Student Support team meeting, following NEPS guidelines.
- The Year Head liaises with parents, subject teachers, class tutors and the Guidance Counsellor to address any issues of concern.

- Individual meetings are held between students and the Guidance Counsellor, or parents and the Guidance Counsellor on request. These can be in relation to personal, educational or career matters.
- Students' Council includes first year students who take part in many aspects of school life and represent the views of the students, as well as organise school events.
- As part of the RE speakers programme & speakers organised by the Senior management team, students attend talks / workshops relating to their personal and social development (e.g. an Garda Síochána are invited in to speak to students about personal safety and cyber bullying/internet safety & resilience talks are held).
- Assemblies are conducted regularly to reinforce positive behaviour, to reflect on our school ethos, to provide positive feedback to year groups and highlight all the activities which take place for that year group.
- All 1<sup>st</sup> year classes attend a retreat as part of the RE programme
- All 1<sup>st</sup> years are invited to participate in the Overnight Soccer fundraiser.
- On Friday of the final week of school, there is a 1<sup>st</sup> year Sports Day.

- **Study Skills.** Study plans and a Study Skills leaflet are available to 2<sup>nd</sup> year students. Study skills are incorporated into the SPHE programme and resources are available in the SPHE Subject Box.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> year students may make **individual guidance appointments.**
- Continuing development of self-knowledge, personality, qualities and potential through SPHE and RE programmes (including speakers on Internet Resilience, etc.)
- 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.
- The Guidance Counsellors deliver Study Skills & Careers Exploration modules with 2<sup>nd</sup> years as part of Guidance related learning at Junior cycle.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> year academic mentoring is facilitated by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Year Head & guidance counsellor and involves targeted support & mentoring for students.
- Second year students are encouraged to become autonomous members of the school community.
- All students have three periods of Religion per week.
- Students are encouraged to become active members of the school community through the extensive range of extracurricular activities.
- All classes have one period of SPHE/RSE per week.
- All classes have a double period of PE per week.

- All classes have one class period of CSPE per week.
- Learning or emotional issues which arise are dealt with through the School Pastoral Care System; which includes teachers, year heads, the Chaplain, the Guidance Counsellors and the SEN Department. Students of significant concern may be referred for a Student Support team meeting, following NEPS guidelines.
- Parent teacher meetings for second year students are scheduled.
- Year Head liaises with parents, subject teachers, class tutors and the guidance counsellor to address any issues of concern.
- Students can avail of counselling with the Guidance Counsellor by referral from a teacher, parent or by self-referral. Students are divided & shared between both guidance counsellors based on their class &/or year group. A list of the division of class groups is posted on a noticeboard in the staffroom, on the Guidance noticeboard for students & a copy is given to each Year Head & member of Senior Management.
- Individual meetings are held between students and the Guidance counsellor and parents and the Guidance Counsellor on request. These can be in relation to personal, educational or career matters.
- Referrals to outside agencies are made when the school resources and expertise are exhausted in dealing with particular issues.
- Assemblies are conducted regularly to reinforce positive behaviour, to reflect on our school ethos, to provide positive feedback to year groups and highlight all the activities which take place for that year group.

- Students' Council includes second year students who take part in many aspects of school life and represent the views of the students, as well as organise school events.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Year**

- **Study Skills.** Study plans and a specific 3<sup>rd</sup> year Study Skills leaflet are available to all 3<sup>rd</sup> year students.
- Study skills are incorporated into the SPHE programme and resources are available in the SPHE Subject Box.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> year students may make **individual guidance appointments.**
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Guidance related learning incorporates modules on Study Skills, Learning Styles & Subject Choice delivered by the Guidance Counsellor & organised with the cooperation of the SPHE and subject teachers (see Guidance Programme Appendix for details, presentations & study guides). This module is conducted in smaller groups (e.g.  $n = 12$ )
- 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.
- Guidance Counsellors meet with the 3<sup>rd</sup> year class groups to discuss 5<sup>th</sup> year subject options – a presentation on the different subjects and subject implications for 3<sup>rd</sup> level courses / colleges is presented (see Appendix). These Guidance classes are organised with the cooperation of the SPHE (and other subject teachers if timetable restrictions apply) teachers when students are

making 5<sup>th</sup> year Programme and Subject Choice decisions and are group / small group & individual in structure. 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 5<sup>th</sup> year Subject Choice options and implications (see Appendix). Parents are informed via text & the school calendar.
- Resources are available on the school website for 3<sup>rd</sup> years & 3<sup>rd</sup> year parents (e.g. Subject Information sheets generated by subject teachers in the school, links to Careers Portal & Qualifax Minimum Subject Requirements tool. Information available on the internet [Careersportal.ie](http://Careersportal.ie) and [Qualifax.ie](http://Qualifax.ie).
- Junior Cert Examination Special Accommodations are processed by the SEN Department.
- All 3<sup>rd</sup> Year students attend a retreat as part of the RE programme
- Individual career appointments are available for any 3<sup>rd</sup> year students to assist with decisions re going into 5<sup>th</sup> year/TY and subject choice specifically.
- The Guidance Counsellor meets with all 3<sup>rd</sup> year students progressing directly to 5<sup>th</sup> year (& those who are undecided) to discuss 5<sup>th</sup> year subject choice, matriculation & entry requirements, subject, career & course research, etc. 5<sup>th</sup> year subject choice discussion occurs in class groups / split class groups & follow-up individual appointments in the guidance office with 2-3 students at a time.

- 3<sup>rd</sup> year students, particularly those considering progressing directly to 5<sup>th</sup> year or LCA are encouraged to attend the **Lunch time Careers speakers** and all lunch time speaker announcements are advertised as ‘open to all students’
- A Senior Cycle Options evening presentation is provided for parents by the Guidance Counsellors & TY / LCA Co-Ordinator. In addition, information sheets on the each 5<sup>th</sup> year choice subjects are available on the school website; these fact sheets have been prepared by the subject departments.
- Students have a choice either to go into fifth year or to apply to Transition Year or Leaving Certificate Applied. This process (TY & LCA) is decided by an application and interview process.
- Assemblies are conducted regularly to reinforce positive behaviour, to reflect on our school ethos, to provide positive feedback to year groups and highlight all the activities which take place for that year group, including work experience & opportunities to volunteer to take part in various initiatives.
- Students’ Council includes third years who take part in many aspects of school life and represent the views of the students, as well as organise school events.
- All classes have one period of SPHE/RSE per week.
- All classes have a double period of PE per week.
- All classes have one class period of CSPE per week.
- All students have three periods of Religion per week.

## *Senior Cycle*

The aims of the Guidance Counselling programme are:

- to help students to develop an awareness and acceptance of their talents and abilities
- to explore possibilities and opportunities open to them
- to grow in independence and to take responsibility for themselves
- to make informed choices about their lives and to follow through on those choices.

The Guidance Counselling programme at senior cycle aims to assist the full development of each student's potential, to help students grow in self-knowledge and self-esteem and to prepare him for higher or further education, training and/or employment.

### *Objectives:*

Guidance Counselling should endeavour to provide students with opportunities to:

- Prepare to manage their successful transition from second level to further or higher education, training or employment.
- Identify their own key motivating factors.
- Prepare for the successful transition into adulthood.
- Learn about jobs search and job retention skills.
- Develop research and Information Technology skills so that they can be self-directed in their career exploration and development.
- Learn about the world of work, including employment rights and responsibilities.
- Develop skills to become independent and self-motivated learners.

## *Transition Year*

- TY students have a single Careers class each week throughout TY. This class takes place in the computer room (timetable permitting) – see Appendix for specific details on the Transition Year Guidance curriculum.
  
- The Careers module incorporates the following 4 themes:
  - Developing Self Awareness
  - Careers & Course Exploration
  - Subject Choice Preparation
  - Preparation for the World of Work & Job Search Skills

& includes a focus on:

- **Self-Assessment & Awareness** which can include: reflection on TY modules (e.g. different subject options, Youth Leadership module) and TY experiences (e.g. work experience, Law workshop, Matrix Workshop); 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.
  
- **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/ labour market trends.

- **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, ncca.ie, examinations.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.
- **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 **5<sup>th</sup> Year Options Parents information night** is held in early February; Parents are informed via text and on the school calendar.

- Transition Year students are encouraged to attend the **Lunch time Careers speakers** and all lunch time speaker announcements are advertised as ‘open to all students’
- Transition year students may make **individual guidance appointments**. Individual counselling / guidance meetings are available by referral or on request

The Transition Year programme itself provides a wide range of whole school guidance activities. Personal Development modules in TY include pastoral care activities such as volunteering in the local retirement home, GAA Future Leaders programme, Wellbeing modules, and a range of learning experiences such as Build a Bank, the School Show, etc.

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.

To assist students in making the transition from Junior Certificate to Transition, the following is in place. This is a sample of the many and varied activities which our students are actively encouraged to engage with throughout the year:

- ✓ T. Y. induction day
- ✓ Bonding trip
- ✓ Programme Co-ordinator/Year Head
- ✓ Work experience
- ✓ Folder of excellence, certificates of merit, distinction and participation
- ✓ Report at Christmas & at the end of year
- ✓ Graduation & TY Parents Evening
- ✓ Subject tasters in class
- ✓ Personality/Interests Assessments
- ✓ Wellbeing - health and wellbeing, work safety, personal choices
- ✓ GAA Leadership programme
- ✓ Youth Leadership
- ✓ Build a Bank
- ✓ Interview skills
- ✓ Business - enterprise and mini company
- ✓ Student Enterprise Awards
- ✓ European Computer Driving Licence course (ECDL)
- ✓ Retreat
- ✓ Various educational visits/trips
- ✓ Gaisce
- ✓ John Paul II Awards

- ✓ Numerous guest speakers on topics deemed suited to the group, e.g. Careers speakers, well-being speakers, etc.
- ✓ Each TY class has a weekly Careers class which extends throughout the entire year.
- ✓ Each TY class has a weekly tutorial class with the TY Co-ordinator.

As with other year groups:

- All classes have a double period of PE per week.
- Assemblies are conducted regularly to reinforce positive behaviour, to reflect on our school ethos, to provide positive feedback to year groups and highlight all the activities which take place for that year group
- Students' Council includes Transition Year students who take part in many aspects of school life and represent the views of the students, as well as organise school events.
- Learning or emotional issues which arise are dealt with through the School Pastoral Care System; which includes tutors, year heads, the Guidance Counsellor and the SEN Department. Students of significant concern may be referred for a Student Support team meeting, following NEPS guidelines.
- The TY Co-ordinator/Year Head liaises with parents, subject teachers and the guidance counsellor to address any issues of concern.
- All students have three periods of Religion per week.
- Individual meetings are held between students and the Guidance Counsellor and parents and the Guidance Counsellor on request. These can be in relation to personal, educational or career matters.
- A Senior Cycle Options evening presentation is provided for parents by the Guidance Counsellors & LCA Co-Ordinator. In addition, information sheets on the each 5<sup>th</sup> year choice subjects are available on the school website; these fact sheets have been prepared by the subject departments.

- As part of the Transition year Careers class Programme the Guidance Counsellor meets with/presents to all Transition year students to discuss 5<sup>th</sup> year subject choice, matriculation & entry requirements, subject, career & course research, etc. 5<sup>th</sup> year subject choice discussion occurs in class groups & individually during careers class time or in the guidance office as required.
- Students can avail of counselling with the Guidance Counsellor by referral from a teacher, parent or by self-referral. Students are divided & shared between both guidance counsellors based on their class &/or year group. A list of the division of class groups is posted on a noticeboard in the staffroom, on the Guidance noticeboard for students & a copy is given to each Year Head & member of Senior Management.
- Referrals to outside agencies are made and when the school resources and expertise are exhausted in dealing with particular issues.

### *5<sup>th</sup> year*

In fifth year, students have a choice of traditional Leaving Certificate or LCA. The majority choose traditional Leaving Certificate.

- 5<sup>th</sup> year Guidance incorporates formal guidance modules on Study Skills & Careers Exploration (see Appendix for presentations & planning)
- 5<sup>th</sup> year students may make **individual guidance appointments** through self-referral or may be referred for a meeting with the guidance counsellor. 5<sup>th</sup> year students are asked to follow the same procedure as 6<sup>th</sup> year students and complete a Vocational Guidance Interview (VGI) form (available outside the Guidance Counsellor's office – see Appendix) in advance of a guidance meeting following the same procedure as for 6<sup>th</sup> year students.

- 5<sup>th</sup> 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.
- Individual meetings are held between students and the guidance counsellor and parents and the guidance counsellor on request. These can be in relation to personal, educational or career matters.
- Referrals to outside agencies are made when the school resources and expertise are exhausted in dealing with particular issues.
- Study skills resources are provided for all students.
- All students have three periods of Religion per week.
- Assemblies are conducted regularly to reinforce positive behaviour, to reflect on our school ethos, to provide positive feedback to year groups and highlight all the activities which take place for that year group.
- Students Council includes fifth years who take part in many aspects of school life and represent the views of the students, as well as organise school events.
- The RE department organise several speakers each year which provide essential opportunities for personal development and reflection (see Appendix – list of RE speakers). In addition 5<sup>th</sup> year students attend a Retreat during 5<sup>th</sup> year.
- 5<sup>th</sup> Years are encouraged to attend the **Lunch time Careers seminars** which are announced via the school intercom, online school calendar and guidance notice boards.

- Based on numbers (some events have number restrictions set by the external agencies/colleges) & interest, 5<sup>th</sup> years are given opportunities to attend a variety of career related workshops & events, such as 5<sup>th</sup> year Computer Camp, Open Days, Engineers Week (WIT), Careers in Medicine seminar, Safe Pass course.
- Additional speakers and seminars are organised (e.g. Study Skills, Internet Resilience) in consultation with management, 5<sup>th</sup> year Year Head, guidance counsellors and members of the pastoral care team.
- Guidance Counsellor meets with all 5<sup>th</sup> year students who are intending to apply through UCAS or other colleges abroad post-Easter of 5<sup>th</sup> 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).
- All classes have six classes of SPHE/RSE.

### *5<sup>th</sup> Year Leaving Certificate Applied*

In addition to the above, the 5<sup>th</sup> 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 (based on timetable needs). The VPG subject includes 4 distinct modules in 5<sup>th</sup> year and the module Guidance which continues throughout 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> 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.
  
- 5<sup>th</sup> year Leaving Certificate Applied students complete the Vocational Preparation Task in 5<sup>th</sup> year; this task will focus on either Enterprise or Career Investigation.
  
- 5<sup>th</sup> Year LCA students complete four weeks of work experience in two two-week blocks.
  
- All LCA students complete the Vocational Preparation & Guidance module through three class periods per week, with a specific focus on guidance, career & future planning.
  
- LCA students complete Social Education which incorporates RSE topics.

- 5<sup>th</sup> year LCA students are given the opportunity to attend the WCFE Open Day, talks on Apprenticeships from Waterford Wexford ETB and, where numbers allow complete the Safe Pass course and if relevant visit the local National Learning Network centre.

## **6<sup>th</sup> Year**

- **6<sup>th</sup> year Career guidance vocational interviews. Key Periods: Sept – Feb 1<sup>st</sup>.**  
It is the responsibility of each 6<sup>th</sup> 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 – at the 6<sup>th</sup> year Assembly in Aug. The VGI forms are stored securely in the guidance office. 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 5<sup>th</sup> year grades and set targets for individual subjects, discuss college and course options, the CAO process (receiving the CAO Information Hand out – see Appendix), 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. Students may make additional appointments.
- **UCAS. Key dates are Oct 15<sup>th</sup> & January 15<sup>th</sup>.** Students are advised at the beginning of the academic year in 6<sup>th</sup> year & at the end of 5<sup>th</sup> 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: November - January. Key Dates: January 20<sup>th</sup> & February 1<sup>st</sup>.* In addition to individual vocational guidance interviews and the CAO Information Sheet,
  
- 6<sup>th</sup> 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 for specific details; this period occurs when PE is timetabled and is kindly facilitated by the PE department. The 6<sup>th</sup> 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 6<sup>th</sup> year Career Guidance programme and the use of CACG is fundamental in this regard.
  - Use of Qualifax.ie & Careersportal.ie forms a key component of 6<sup>th</sup> 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](http://studentfinance.ie) & [susi.ie](http://susi.ie).
  - Introduction to the DARE & HEAR application systems – [accesscollege.ie](http://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.
  - Use of the guidance section of the school website which includes specific resources for 6<sup>th</sup> year students and parents, the Guidance Calendar (with information on Open days, important dates, lunch time speakers, etc.)
- **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 6<sup>th</sup> 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 (preparation for aptitude assessments, e.g. ESB), Career Interest Inventory, John Holland test, Rothwell Miller interest test, etc. are used as required.
  - Furthermore, in December & January both guidance counsellors facilitate lunch time sessions in the computer room for 6<sup>th</sup> year students to complete the 'demo' and the actual CAO application form, PLC application forms & complete careers research prior to the January 20<sup>th</sup> 'Early bird' deadline. Students are informed of

the above via intercom notices to all, 6<sup>th</sup> year Assembly, class & individual appointments, the Parents information evening & the Career Guidance notice board.

- A **Parent's information evening on 6<sup>th</sup> Year Options** is held in October, with an information leaflet and presentation delivered to all in attendance (& available from the College office for those who may not be able to attend). 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, Careers & Course research – see Appendix. Parents are also informed of the division of class groups among the guidance counsellors, how students can make appointments, lunch time computer room sessions, Lunch time Careers speakers, resources available on the school website (calendar, twitter, etc.).
  
- **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 6<sup>th</sup> year students attend which do focus on PLC courses in a session, students interested in attending WCFE in particular attend the WCFE Open Day. Furthermore, when the WCFE applications process opens in mid – January, lunch time 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.
  
- **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. A specific 6<sup>th</sup> year study skills

plan is available to all 6<sup>th</sup> years and is stored outside the Career Guidance office for students to access at any time.

- **Higher Options & Open Days.** Information on all Open Days are presented on the school guidance calendar (on school website), guidance notice boards and through the school intercom system. At the end of 5<sup>th</sup> year students interested in attending the Higher Options Careers Fair order their tickets through the guidance counsellor. 6<sup>th</sup> year students are encouraged to attend the Waterford IT & WCFE Open day if relevant to their course and career interests. Based on interest and viable bus numbers students are facilitated to attend other open days (e.g. UL) but are encouraged to attend the many open days which occur on Saturdays.
- Topics such as transition from school, life choices, coping with the unexpected, support agencies, personal responsibility and motivation addressed during RE and Guidance classes.
- All classes have six classes of SPHE/RSE.
- Learning or emotional issues which arise are dealt with through the School Pastoral Care System; which includes tutors, year heads, the Guidance Counsellor and the SEN Department. Students of significant concern may be referred for a Student Support team meeting, following NEPS guidelines.
- Parent teacher meetings for sixth year students are scheduled. Students accompany their parents to these meetings.
- Individual meetings are held between students and the guidance counsellor and parents and the guidance counsellor on request. These can be in relation to personal, educational or career matters.
- Referrals to outside agencies are made when the school resources and expertise are exhausted in dealing with particular issues.

- Assemblies are conducted regularly to reinforce positive behaviour, to reflect on our school ethos, to provide positive feedback to year groups and highlight all the activities which take place for that year group – particularly in relation to mock examinations, CAO/PLC/UCAS deadlines, accessing guidance support, etc.
- Students' Council includes sixth years who take part in many aspects of school life and represent the views of the students, as well as organise school events.
- All students have three periods of Religion per week.
- Students have one-to-one career planning meetings with the Guidance Counsellor. It is the aim of the Guidance service to ensure that each sixth year student receives a minimum of one guidance appointment with the Guidance Counsellor. If a student requires more time, another appointment can be organised by arrangement with the Guidance Counsellor.
- Visiting speakers are invited in throughout the year. These are generally from Higher Education Institutes (HEI), Colleges of Further Education (CFE) & the local ETB. They may be general information talks on the specific HEI or they may be subject specific, depending on the needs of the year group. There is a focus on ensuring a mixture of topics are given the opportunity for exploration through these sessions. In addition some local businesses which represent different career opportunities in different career sectors may attend as part of STEAM initiatives. All of these speakers attend at lunch-time so that all students have the opportunity to attend, without interfering with their academic work. 'Lunch time careers talks' which are advertised on the school twitter account, the Guidance noticeboard & through the school intercom. Students sign a 'sign up' sheet to attend these events.
- There is a strong emphasis on each student achieving their potential.

- Students are encouraged to attend Open Days on Saturdays to ensure students do not miss class time. A schedule of Open Days is displayed on the Guidance noticeboard and on the school website via the Guidance Calendar.
- The Guidance Calendar of events, including all important deadlines, Open Days and speakers, is shared with staff and students via the school Guidance website. It is updated as events are added throughout the year.

### *6<sup>th</sup> Year Leaving Certificate Applied*

In addition to the above, the 6<sup>th</sup> 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 for more details. The VPG subject includes 4 distinct modules in 5<sup>th</sup> 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 6<sup>th</sup> 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 5<sup>th</sup> 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<sup>th</sup> year LCA students are given the opportunity to attend the WCFE Open Day, talks on Apprenticeships from Waterford Wexford ETB and, where numbers allow complete the Safe Pass course and if relevant visit the local National Learning Network centre.
  
- LCA students complete Social Education which incorporates RSE topics.
  
- 6<sup>th</sup> year LCA students have four weeks of work experience in two, two-week blocks.

## **8. Guidance Programme** **Considerations**

This section is divided into:

- Differentiation in Guidance & Assessment
- Literacy in Guidance
- Numeracy in Guidance
- Planning for Students with Special Educational Needs
- Planning for Cultural Diversity

- New Junior Cycle & Wellbeing

## 8.1 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 6<sup>th</sup> 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, 6<sup>th</sup> 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](http://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:
  - o Aspects of the work that have been successful – WILF (What I am Looking For)
  - o Aspects that might need to be improved on
  - o 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.
  - o 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 LCA<sub>1</sub> 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 LCA<sub>1</sub> 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 LCA<sub>1</sub> 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 students' 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 pints of strength and weakness within them).

## 8.2 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 schools SSE plan, 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) 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 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year, approximately 50% of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year student body will progress immediately to 5<sup>th</sup> 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 the Appendix.

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.

## 8.3 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.

In addition, in line with the school's SSE targets, specifically the school's numeracy targets are incorporated into the guidance programme – for instance, assessments & quizzes often include numerical problem solving & results are given in a fraction format with students required to calculate their percentage score.

## **8.4 Planning for Students with Special Needs**

The Guidance & Counselling Department is very conscious of the need to facilitate our students with special needs. It is our aim to maximise the learning potential for each of our students. In the teaching of Career Guidance, new concepts & vocabulary are often introduced which may prove difficult for our special needs students. Various teaching methodologies (e.g. pre-teaching key words, differentiated worksheets, use of Google Classroom & Google Translate) are employed to make these more accessible. Power-point presentations, copies of homework or assignments (& rubrics) are offered to students in advance & following class to aid in revision & study. Assignments are differentiated, if necessary, to support the learner also (e.g. differentiated versions of assignments & quiz worksheets). The Guidance Department works closely with our colleagues in the SEN Department & SNAs as they often provide valuable insight into the particular needs of some special needs students. We rely on their expertise in areas where we might be unsure.

## **8.5 Planning for a Cultural Diversity**

The Career Guidance Department is conscious to value and respect the cultural diversity and needs of all our learners. Support for our learners, particularly EAL learners can include the following:

- ✓ Much of the Career Guidance teaching involves using visual aids for example,
- ✓ Power Point & website images & diagrams (e.g. NFQ framework).
- ✓ Key words are written on the board.
- ✓ The teacher communicates and works with the language teacher who also helps EAL students.
- ✓ Encourage the students to ask if they find something too difficult.
- ✓ Encourage the use of dictionaries and thesauruses & Google Translate in the class and in examination situations.
- ✓ Try to avail of the background and knowledge of these students to enrich and stimulate other student's awareness of other cultures and countries.
- ✓ In 6<sup>th</sup> year the guidance counsellor is conscious to enquire about language exemptions (e.g. NUI Irish exemption application may be required) and if the student is considering taking an additional language (perhaps the students native language or another language of proficiency) for the Leaving Certificate.

## 8.6 New Junior Cycle & Wellbeing

The Framework for Junior Cycle (2015) provides for a new area of learning at junior cycle called Wellbeing. Wellbeing will cross the three years of junior cycle and build on substantial work already taking place in schools in support of students' wellbeing. The introduction of Wellbeing into the Junior Certificate in September 2017 recognises the association between the quality of relationships between teachers and students and a number of student outcomes, including socio-emotional wellbeing, engagement in schoolwork, feeling a sense of belonging in school, levels of disciplinary problems, and academic achievement. Guidance related learning forms part of the Wellbeing programme at junior cycle. On-going review will be required to ensure that the guidance programme supports the wellbeing of all students in junior cycle. De la Salle College is

ready to take on this important programme and recognises that student wellbeing is something that, similar to guidance, requires a whole-school approach.

## **9. 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

### **9.1 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 on-going 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 card and are instructed to present their appointment card to their class teacher, requesting permission to attend, in advance of the appointment. Students are also advised to record their appointment in their school journal.

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 15<sup>th</sup>, Jan 15<sup>th</sup>, Jan 20<sup>th</sup> & Feb 1<sup>st</sup>) 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.

## 9.2 Time Allocation & Timetabling

For the school year 2018-2019, the school allocated 44 hours to guidance, between two guidance counsellors, of which 10 hours has been allocated to Career Guidance & VPG classes (Transition year, LCA<sub>1</sub>, LCA<sub>2</sub> & 6<sup>th</sup> year) and the remainder for career, educational, social and personal guidance & counselling work- generally one-to-one careers & counselling appointments. However, this flexibility also facilitates various 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year class & small group guidance interventions (careers exploration, subject choice, study skills, etc.). 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 (where the timetable allows).

## 9.3 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 Yearbook Diary.

## **9.4 Protocols/procedures for meetings with parents /guardians**

### Protocol for Guidance Meetings with Parents / Guardians

Parents meet with the Guidance Counsellors at information evenings, parent/teacher meetings and on request. 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. 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. Meetings may be conducted over the phone also.

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. The student may be invited for all or part of the meeting with approval of parents/guardians

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. Notes are kept of all meetings by the Guidance Counsellor.

## 9.5 Assessment Procedures

Assessment can include Assessment of Learning (AoL) and Assessment for Learning (AfL) as detailed earlier. Transition year assessment includes assignments such as Career investigation & Course Investigations, Preparation for the World of Work folder (students may submit a choice of work) and their learning log which is recorded at the end of each class. Transition Year, LCA and 6<sup>th</sup> year class groups also have Careers Workbooks & worksheets. LCA students submit key assignments and a Vocational Preparation Task as part of the VPG module and are assigned work in class. Furthermore, LCA & 6<sup>th</sup> year career guidance classes assess students' ability to apply their skills through active research skills practice and recording their research into their work-booklets, target setting & the use of differentiated quiz worksheets, 3-2-1 & Kahoot quizzes 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.

## **10. Professional Standards & Duties**

This section can be divided into the following areas:

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

## **10.1 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). 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.

## **10.2 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 students 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 – see Children’s First guidelines & Child Protection policy
- 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. Where appropriate the Designated Liaison Person may make contact with TUSLA for a formal referral or to seek advice (informal consultation) & / or contact the student’s parents/guardians. The DLP will keep a record of all TUSLA referrals made.

### 10.3 GDPR: Guidance & Data Compliance

The Irish Data Protection legislation sees the organisation, school or institute as the **Data Controller**, “the legal entity which, alone or with others, determines the processing and use of the personal data”. Staff who are employees of the organisation, who gather and process personal data, are doing so on behalf of the organisation, and must comply with the organisation’s data management procedures in order to protect the privacy rights of individuals, to protect the organisation’s reputation and, where possible, to avoid breaches of the legislation. For Guidance Counsellors who are employees of the school or institution, the school as a legal entity will be the Data Controller. The **Data Subject** is the living individual to whom the personal data relates. For the most part, the Guidance Counsellor will gather data on the students for whom

he or she will be providing guidance counselling, but they will also have contact details for employers and others who support their guidance activities;

Compliance with this national legislation is enforced by the Office of the Irish Data Protection Commission and will be based on adherence to the seven Principles which form the framework for the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), an EU Regulation that replaced the pre-existing Data Protection legislation in May 2018.

Any data management activity involving personal information which is conducted by the organisation must comply with the seven principles of the GDPR from May 2018 onwards.

### *The Data Protection Principles:*

The following key principles are enshrined in the Irish legislation and are fundamental to De La Salle College's Data Protection policy.

In its capacity as Data Controller, De La Salle College ensures that all data shall:

1. Be obtained and processed fairly, lawfully and in a transparent manner.
2. Be obtained only for one or more specified, legitimate purposes.
3. Only be processed to the minimum necessary to achieve the specified purpose(s).
4. Be kept accurate, complete and up-to-date where necessary.
5. Not be kept for longer than is necessary to satisfy the specified purpose(s).
6. Be kept safe and secure in order to protect the confidentiality and integrity of the data.

7. Be managed and stored in such a manner that De La Salle College can easily and verifiably demonstrate its compliance with the appropriate legislation.

Compliance with the legislation can be seen from three perspectives:

**Personal:** The personal data which the organisation processes relating to its students, staff or parents who in turn may process the personal data of the staff, parents and pupils of their school;

**Professional:** Within the day-to-day activities of the Institute, the legislation requires that personal data is managed in a compliant and appropriate manner;

**Reputational:** Any breach of the legislation reflects negatively on the credibility and reputation of the organisation, and damages peoples' trust in the institution and its activities. Managing the personal data in a compliant manner reduces the risk of this happening.

### *Data Collection in De La Salle College*

As part of the Guidance & Counselling service offered by De la Salle College, the guidance counsellors may become aware of various personal details of the students (e.g. email, career interests, areas of concern, academic scores, special educational needs, exemptions, financial circumstances, family circumstances, etc.). All information is treated in the strictest confidence, in accordance with the Guidance Plan & Policy and disseminated, where strictly necessary, on a strict need to know basis.

Data is collected on students in various forms, for instance:

- Through the school application process (e.g. incoming first year application), through a standardised form, submitted to & stored in the school office.
- Visits to feeder primary schools by the Guidance Counsellor to ascertain if there is any information such as access to Learning Support, Resource, SNA, Exemptions etc. which may not have been recorded on their initial application (for instance if there was a late application for an exemption, etc.) & may be relevant to the student. This information is forwarded to the SEN Co-ordinator, where appropriate.
- The gathering of appropriate contact details of parents, guardians and family members who are the primary points of contact in relation to the students' education and welfare.
- The disclosure of this personal data to appropriate authorities, governing bodies, national organisations, inspectors and officers;
- Psychometric assessments are completed with the incoming 1<sup>st</sup> year cohort & other groups on an ad-hoc needs basis. Again, results are stored securely – feedback (if appropriate) & interpretation practices are detailed below.
- Equally, a parent may inform the guidance counsellor of their son's academic scores, access to supports, financial circumstances, well-being or mental & physical health as part of a parental referral to the guidance counsellor.
- Principal, Deputy Principal, Year head, or Teachers may make a referral to the guidance counsellor, expressing a concern, etc. about a student. Referrals are generally made using the 'referral form' in order to maintain record keeping. The name of the student and any other information that could identify the student is fully removed by the Guidance Counsellor and replaced with a code. This code is different to any other number or letter/number combination used in the school.
- Some Year Heads email referrals to the Guidance Counsellor and a new electronic referral form has been introduced to minimise the use of paper-based collection of confidential data. The information from the electronic referrals is inputted into the electronic notes form which are stored in a password protected folder on the C drive of the Guidance Counsellor's laptop, which is also password protected.
- Occasionally, a teacher may make a verbal referral to the guidance counsellor, and where made verbally to the guidance counsellor, will be recorded on a referral form by the guidance counsellor at the time of referral & stored securely in the guidance

office, or else the electronic form can be used. Once the transfer to electronic referrals takes place this will remain stored securely on the Guidance Counsellor laptops as described above

- In addition, as part of the guidance programme, the student may record details of their subjects, careers of interest, recent grades, etc. This information is recorded by the student themselves on a standard Vocational Guidance Interview form and stored in a secure office, by the individual guidance counsellor.

### *Use*

All data pertaining to students (e.g. counselling notes, referral notes, VGI forms, student's academic records, etc.) is used to provide informed support to the student's individual guidance & / or counselling needs

### *Note-Taking*

School staff members who provide counselling and welfare services within the school must do so in compliance with the Codes of Practice of their professional bodies, as well as keeping in line with best practice in terms of student welfare, child safeguarding and note-taking. Guidance Counsellors, as part of the provision of both guidance & counselling support to students, may keep notes on students (e.g. counselling & referral notes, or vocational guidance forms). All counselling notes are kept brief, factual & are recorded on a standard referral form by the individual guidance counsellor.

The Institute of Guidance Counsellors provides clear recommendations on the note taking practices of the Guidance Counsellor in the Data Protection Handbook drafted by Sytorus Ltd. (2018). De La Salle College meets these recommendations in the following ways;

- Any notes taken during the course of the provision of such services are highly confidential and are treated at all times with the utmost care and attention.

- Notes taken during counselling meetings are sparse, and should only include the minimum level of detail to enable the counsellor to provide appropriate counselling, and to maintain a duty of care from one meeting to another
- The Guidance Counsellor has a particular duty of care towards the storage of the notes, in order to protect the trust placed in them by the student and parents, as well as to protect the quality and integrity of the counselling process.
- The identity of the student undertaking counselling is protected at all times. While it may be necessary to be able to identify the student from the notes taken, the counsellor takes steps to mask or protect the student from being immediately identifiable. This is done through the use of a Student ID number which is a code distinguishable only to the Guidance Counsellor. The key to this code is kept separate to the notes and accessible only by the Guidance Counsellor. This code should only be made available to other parties at the discretion of the counsellor, and with the best interests of the student in mind.
- Notes taken should avoid any reference to other information – such as gender, parental circumstances, socio-economic circumstances or health information – which might inadvertently identify the individual student;
- The counsellor takes guidance from appropriate authorities (Tusla, HSE, HIQA) regarding the appropriate retention of such notes, and the timely destruction of such material once its purpose has been fulfilled; • Where the welfare of the student continues to be a source for concern, the counsellor continues to hold such notes on file, with a view to having a reliable record of the student's welfare history if required as part of his or her continued care.

A new electronic notes template has been brought into operation where students are given a non-identifiable ID number. The notes are stored in a password protected folder on the C drive of the Guidance Counsellor's laptop, which is also password protected.

## *Storage*

The details of all counselling notes are strictly confidential and stored securely for seven years, following the student's departure from the school.

Indeed, all data pertaining to both guidance & counselling records, notes, VGI forms, etc. are stored in the Guidance office for seven years following the student's departure from the school. Such data can be in physical hard-copy (e.g. referral & counselling paper files) or digital soft-copy format (e.g. references on Word Documents) & are all secured in the individual guidance counsellor's office.

All standardised test scores, VGI forms, counselling notes & all data, compiled through the guidance & / or counselling process is kept securely & confidentially by the individual guidance counsellor in a secure office, on either a password protected desk top computer or in a secure filing cabinet – depending on the format of the data.

Each guidance counsellor has their own office with their own individual key – this is not a 'master key', but individual to the individual guidance office. Both guidance offices contain secure filing cabinets and desk top computers and/or laptops, which are password protected. This room is locked on all occasions where the guidance counsellor is not in the office. Should the guidance office be used for the purposes of the oral examinations, a 'clean desk' policy is ensured, the computer is shut down (password access is required) and the key to the office is held by the examinations co-ordinator only.

### *Special Categories of Data Processing*

The Data Protection Regulation recognises that certain data is particularly susceptible to discrimination or prejudice, and deserves an additional level of protection – this includes data on an individual's racial or ethnic identity, their political, religious or ideological beliefs, their sexual orientation and any information on an individual's mental or physical health, etc.

In the schools context, the results of standardised ability tests (e.g. incoming 1<sup>st</sup> year assessments) would qualify as an indication of an individual student's mental and

academic ability, and would therefore qualify as a special category of processing. Furthermore, while counselling notes are kept brief & factual, sensitive information pertaining to the student may be recorded & equally qualify as a special category of processing.

All standardised test scores, VGI forms, counselling notes & all data, compiled through the guidance & / or counselling process is kept securely & confidentially by the individual guidance counsellor in a secure office, in either a password protected folder on a desktop computer or laptop or in a secure filing cabinet – depending on the format of the data.

### *Disclosure by transmission*

Certain applications are made by students in sixth year, these may include UCAS, DARE, HEAR, REACH applications. The guidance counsellor may help the student with this application & may, on occasion be required to submit a reference for the student & forward on this reference and / or academic details to state bodies, colleges, etc. All transmissions of information are completed in consultation with the student & at the request of the student. As part of these applications, parental consent is required & documented. Again, this information is treated with the strictest confidence & where the guidance counsellor is submitting documentation, copies of such (e.g. references) are kept in soft copy on the password protected computer.

### *Erasure or Destruction*

Student records are kept for 7 years following the students departure from the school. After this period, the records are destroyed in accordance with school procedures.

## **10.4 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.

### ***10.5 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. Both guidance counsellors engage in regular professional development, keep a record of such CPD and actively plan for on-going professional development.

### **10.6 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. Engagement in programmes such as Forbairt, bodies such as NEPS and utilising Subject Development and Planning hours facilitate the evaluation and review process. Equally, the guidance programme is amended in line with the School Improvement Plan, targets & SSE process.

The Guidance Department actively reviews, evaluates & amends guidance programmes annually (& mid-cycle in the case of interventions used with a variety of groups) and

engages in long term planning - see Appendix for examples of annual review, student evaluation feedback & list of priorities & future planning.

The Whole School Guidance Team is involved in review of whole school guidance.

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

**RATIFIED BY BOM ON: 5/12/2018**

Signed:   
Chairperson of the Board of Management

**DATE OF REVIEW: 5/12/2020**