



Díseacht don Fhíor agus don Dúchas

Scoil Ailbhe Naofa

St. Ailbe's School

Policy Document

On

Career Guidance

Díseacht don Fhíor agus don Dúchas

Scoil Ailbhe Naofa

ACTION PLAN

2008-2009

Programmes & Levels

Curriculum Content/ Guidance Syllabus:

Group	Time Table	Syllabus	External
1st Year	<p>No formal timetable.</p> <p>They are met up to 3 times per year or by arrangement with individual teachers as required</p> <p>Small group or individual sessions by appointment</p>	<p>First year day long induction</p> <p>Subject Choice Decisions</p> <p>Study skills discussion</p> <p>Examination Technique</p>	<p>Subject option information session for parents/guardians</p>
2nd Years	<p>No formal class contact</p> <p>Individual sessions by appointment</p> <p>Time permitting one to one meetings with all second years</p>		
3rd Years	<p>No formal classes</p> <p>Individual sessions by appointment</p> <p>One to one meetings with those unsure about Transition Year and those needing to choose 5th year subjects</p>	<p>Transition Year discussion</p> <p>Subject Choice for those going directly into 5th Year</p>	<p>Subject option information session for parent/guardians</p> <p>Study Skills Seminar</p>
4th Years	<p>Formal class contact – 35 minutes per week</p> <p>Individual sessions by appointment</p>	<p>Career Options</p> <p>Multiple Intelligence</p> <p>Psychometric Testing: Rothwell Miller, Career Interest Inventory</p> <p>CV Preparation</p> <p>Work Experience Preparation</p> <p>Career Investigation</p> <p>Research Skills</p> <p>Subject Choice for 5th Year</p>	<p>Students are encouraged to attend career talks, presentations, seminars, open days etc</p>

5th Years	<p>No formal classes</p> <p>Individual sessions by appointment</p> <p>One to one meetings with those unsure about Transition Year and those needing to choose 5th year subjects</p> <p>Classes are arranged when requested by Guidance Counsellor</p>	<p>Career Options</p> <p>Research Skills</p> <p>Career Investigation</p>	<p>Students are encouraged to attend career talks, presentations, seminars, open days etc</p> <p>FAS Opportunities, Croke Park</p> <p>Speakers from various colleges</p>
6th Years	<p>Formal class contact</p> <p>Individual sessions by appointment</p>	<p>The guidance programme is designed to meet the needs of our students so it is important that they make known their requirements.</p> <p>Career Preparation</p> <p>Study Skills</p> <p>Time Management</p> <p>Career Choice</p> <p>IT Skills</p> <p>UCAS</p> <p>CAO</p> <p>Application Forms</p> <p>Career Choice Book</p> <p>Access Programmes</p> <p>Scholarships</p> <p>Sports Scholarships</p> <p>Budgeting for College</p> <p>PLC Courses</p> <p>Aptitude tests</p> <p>Personality Tests</p> <p>Interview Skills</p> <p>Grants</p> <p>Review & Evaluation</p>	<p>Study Skills</p> <p>Motivation Day</p> <p>Higher Options (Limerick or RDS)</p> <p>Speakers from various colleges</p> <p>Speaker on applying for grants</p>

Homelearning Procedures:

No formal homelearning is given. Students have to research their chosen careers. Transition years present it in a format similar to the Career Investigation completed in LCVP.

Assessment Procedures/ Evaluation:

Assessment is not a feature of guidance. Informal assessment in the clarification of career choice and subject choice, improved study skills and examination technique provide some insight into the effectiveness of the Guidance Counsellor.

Record Keeping Procedures

Three types exist:

1. Career Interviews: A record of one to one meetings, are kept on the computer.
2. Personal Counselling Sessions. A summary of these meetings are recorded and are:
 - kept for 7 years (minimum)
 - contain some of the actual words and phrases used by the student
 - recorded straight away to ensure accuracy
 - kept brief
3. Parent Meetings: A record of meetings with parents are kept and filed.

Reporting Procedures

In both Personal Counselling and Career Guidance Sessions the confidentiality rule is followed i.e. school management, class teacher, year head and/or parents / guardians are informed if it is felt that the student is in danger to herself and/or to others or it is a legal requirement. The student is always informed of the limits of confidentiality at the beginning of a session. If it is felt in the student's best interests to inform a Teacher/Parent/Guardian of a particular difficulty, this is only done with the knowledge and hopefully the agreement of the student.

(IGC Code of Ethics (2004) outline the importance of following good practice).

The Guidance and Counselling Service

St. Ailbe's School.

Aims of the Guidance and Counselling Service

Bearing in mind the school's mission statement the Guidance and Counselling service in St. Ailbe's refers to a range of learning experiences provided in a developmental sequence, designed to assist students to make transitions consequent on those choices. These choices may be categorised into three separate but interlinked areas:

- personal and social
- educational
- career

Guidance provision by the Guidance Counsellor involves a range guidance and counselling activities and services which aim to "ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance" as set out in the Education Act 1998.

Guidance Activities that Assist Students to Make Choices Include:

Counselling – In St. Ailbe's School students are helped to explore their thoughts and feelings, and the choices open to them; giving care and support to students learning to cope with the many aspects of growing up.

Assessment –students are helped to obtain a better self-understanding through the use of psychometric tests and other inventories.

Information – students are provided with objectives and factual data on education and training opportunities, occupations, labour market information, entitlements etc..

Advice – making suggestions based on the advisor's own knowledge and experience.

Educational Development Programmes – facilitating the transfer of knowledge and skills relating to studying, examination performance, choices of subjects and levels.

Personal and Social Development Programmes – facilitating the transfer of knowledge and skills relating to a student's personal and social development, self-awareness, decision-making and planning.

Referral – this includes two types of activity:

- i) referral of an individual student by the guidance counsellor to other Professionals outside the school, e.g. The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)
- ii) referral of an individual student to the guidance counsellor by teachers, Board of Management, School Management, and parents. The voluntary participation in counselling of the referred student must be

respected by all concerned.

Guidance Activities That Assist Students to Make Transitions Include:

- Careers education/career transition programmes – enabling students to make transitions to further and higher education, training and employment.
- Placement — work experience, work shadowing, and preparing students for employment.
- Follow-up — following up former students regarding progression routes and destinations.
- Other Guidance Activities that Support the Achievement of the Aims of the School Guidance Programme include:
 - Consultation with parents, school staff and students

Feedback — giving feedback to school management and staff on the needs of individual students, groups and the school as an organisation, and how the school guidance programme has supported students' choices and transitions.

- Networking — establishing links with employers, relevant agencies and institutions to enhance guidance work with students.
- Promoting Change — assisting curriculum development in the school.
- Managing, organising and co-ordinating — guidance activities into a coherent programme.

The nature and range of guidance activities are based on the premise that guidance is both a whole school concern and a specialist area within education.

Principles Underpinning the Programme:

The school guidance programme

- is accessible
- recognises that guidance is a specialist area within education
- recognises that guidance is a whole school concern
- is impartial
- is student centred
- is transparent
- is balanced
- is inclusive
- is responsive
- respects confidentiality in counselling and assessment activities
- empowers participants to take responsibility for their own developments

- promotes equal opportunities
- deploys and makes full use of available resources
- is reviewed on an ongoing basis

The Guidance Counsellor, because of his specialist training has a professional role in each of the main areas of guidance: personal and social, educational, and career. In addition Mr. Tony Nolan has a role in collaborating with school management in the development and review of the school guidance plan and the integration of guidance into the curriculum.

Subject teachers have a role in providing support to students and information and advice relating to their subject disciplines and related careers. Some teachers have additional formal responsibilities through management, pastoral care roles, co-ordination roles and through participation in programmes such as SPHE. Individual teachers may be sought out by students on an informal basis for advice and information. All teachers may consult with our guidance counsellor on the needs of an individual student and/or refer the student to the guidance counsellor when specialist competence is required with due regard to confidentiality.

Parents have the most influence, directly or indirectly, on the choices made by young people. Parents have a major influence on the environment in which the young person lives including values, attitudes and lifestyle. Parents have an important part to play in supporting the programme. Parents can also participate in the guidance process through

- (i) consultation with the guidance counsellor and other school staff
- (ii) attendance at relevant information and other meetings at school
- (iii) providing personal assistance and advice to the school guidance programme e.g. in relation to work experience placement, specific information which may impact on a student's overall performance.

The Role of the Guidance Counsellor

The guidance counsellor is professionally trained to undertake the following tasks with the school guidance programme:

Counselling: empowering students to make decisions, solve problems, change behaviours and resolve issues in their lives. Such activity may be personal counselling, educational counselling, career counselling or it may involve combinations of each. Counselling is a key part of the school guidance programme, offered on an individual or group basis as part of a developmental learning process and at moments of personal crises. Counselling on an individual basis is part of the support

structures that the school provides the student with.

Support: the guidance counsellor provides support to parents, teachers, the school principal, Board of Management and referral agencies in assisting the personal and social career and educational development of the student. Such support may include advocacy on behalf of a student.

Assessment:

The guidance counsellor is trained to use a range of psychometric tests and other relevant objectives of the school guidance programme. Such objectives may be related to career and educational planning, personal decision making and development of self awareness.

Information:

Assisting students to acquire interpret and use information relevant to their personal and social, educational and career development.

Classroom Guidance Activities:

This provides classroom based learning experiences that are relevant to the objectives of the school guidance programme. Such experiences include information giving, information and communication technologies (ICT), skills development (planning, decision-making, study skills, communication, values clarification), and vocational preparation

Referrals:

In some instances, the guidance needs of young people may require referral to professionals outside the school, e.g. NEPS, following standard procedures. The guidance counsellor also provides support for students referred by teachers, parents, and school management. The voluntary participation by the individual concerned is respected.

Professional Development:

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

Additional Targets ;

Objectives of the school guidance programme.

Objectives of the Guidance and Counselling Service

Again bearing in mind the school's mission statement as well as the provision of resources, the service's target groups are mainly students at Senior Cycle.

2006/2007 : Enhancing the opportunities which will accrue from our business partnership link with ALZA IRELAND.

2007/2008 : Introduction to guidance opportunities, national employment trends and linking educational opportunities to career paths with third year students in St.Ailbe's School. Helping students make positive educational choices and encouragement in taking up their senior cycle options.

2008/2009: With our incoming first years we hope to create a link directly with parents on the significance of early planning and preparation for career opportunities in future years emphasising attendance, the importance of partnership and making best use of school and community services.

The Specific objectives (Guidance Outcomes) are:

- That courses/programmes for each student are relevant to
 - Abilities
 - interests
 - motivation
 - career aspiration
- that a dedicated guidance timetable is provided for each course/programme
- that subject choices (and levels) are relevant to individual needs
- that students acquire clear self-insights and career focus through Aptitude and Career Inventory testing
- that students gain personal insights into various vocational/job areas through work experience placements
- that students visit third level institutions and training facilities
- that students know specifically where they may pursue further education and training which is relevant to each individual's profile

These objectives are facilitated by the school's provision of programmes/courses such as:

- Fourth Year
- Leaving Certificate Applied
- Leaving certificate Vocational Programme
- Standard Leaving Certificate

Objectives for students at Junior Cycle are more informal and not through dedicated timetabling due to the school's Guidance and Counselling level of resources.

However programmes such as:

- Junior Certificate Schools Programme (JCSP)
- SPHE
- CSPE
- HSCL
- S C P dovetail with the overall aims of the Guidance Counselling provision.

During Third Year students sit aptitude test in order to identify as well as compare and contrast relative strengths and abilities, and to be thus enabled to make decisions regarding Senior Cycle choices, including subjects.

Adult Learners

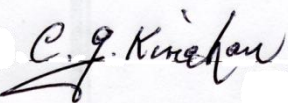
As the school's age profile of student's changes in order to meet the needs of adults the aims of the Guidance and Counselling Service are mindful of the school's mission statement.

Objectives are catered for in an informal way, not through a dedicated timetable, and these objectives include, to a degree of varying success,

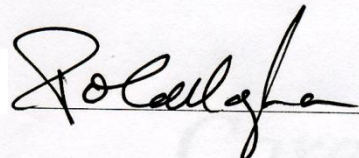
- Access to further education and training (e.g. Access Programmes UL)
- Assertiveness skills development
- Interview skills preparation.

Tony Nolan
Guidance Counsellor.

Signed :



Mr.C. Kinnahan (Chairman B.O.M.)



Mr. P.O'Callaghan (Principal)

Review Date : May 2010

Tony Nolan

**Reviewing Whole School Guidance
(HETAC Diploma in Whole School Guidance Planning)**

**Progress Report 1
Module 1**

13th March 2009 (1,132 Words)

St.Ailbe's School is situated on the outskirts of Tipperary Town. Two hundred and thirty one second level students are enrolled with an almost equal mix of boys and girls.

Approximately twenty primary schools comprise the mixed urban and rural catchment from which the students are enrolled. St.Ailbes is inclusive, accepting all students who apply for entry and has, itself, been included in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) initiative. The school is part of the County Tipperary South Riding Vocational Education Committee (VEC) scheme and provides for the educational needs of second level students through a full range of programmes in addition to the Junior Certificate and the established Leaving Certificate programmes.

The school guidance plan is an area of strategic planning that has in recent times moved centre stage in the lives of guidance counsellors. *Irish Educational Legislation, Department of Education and Science Circulars*, the NCGE publication *Planning the School Guidance Programme*, and workshops organised by the *Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC)* have all placed emphasis on schools having a School Guidance Plan.

Each school is required to develop and implement, as part of its overall plan, a comprehensive guidance plan... (*Guidelines for Schools on the implications of Section 9(c) of the Education Act 1998, draft for consultation*).

Schools as part of the overall School Development Plan will form a comprehensive guidance plan, taking into account the needs of students, available resources and contextual factors. (*Circular M37/03, in relation to above 9(c) document*)

Guidance and Counselling is a professional service, which has a curricular component and which operates in a whole school framework. Against the aforementioned background it is timely to point out that a Guidance Plan already exists in St. Ailbe's. This guidance has been ratified by the board of management and a review date set. The Guidance department has already gone through a Department of Education & Science inspection. The date of the Inspection was May 2nd 2008 and was published in October 2008. A further reason, as if already needed, for this working group to help with Whole School Guidance Planning was mentioned as a recommendation in the inspection : *It is recommended that a small, time-limited task group be identified to manage the process of whole-school guidance planning.*

The setting up of this 'working group' has been a 'must do' since the Inspection and indeed since I became the Guidance Counsellor here in St. Ailbe's last year. I have spoken with the Principal and members of the management in our school about setting up this group. I am delighted to be able to say that I received the fullest co-operation possible from the principal and the management which made the whole process transparent, efficient and worthwhile. Having met with Mr. O'Callaghan (Principal) on a number of occasions and having attended the first module with him in Dublin we agreed to hold a preliminary meeting prior to the full assembly of the guidance planning group. This preliminary group met with the agenda of looking at the Guidance service for First Years. Management felt that as guidance provision for first years was a prerequisite of the guidance plan it would be

advantageous to meet prior to meeting with the Guidance planning Group. This meeting took place with the following people present :

Mr. Paul O'Callaghan (Principal)
Mr. John Blackburn (Deputy Principal)
Ms. Siobhan Landers (First Year Head)
Mr. Tony Nolan (Guidance Counsellor)

As per the Guidance Plan the provision for First Years was as follows :
The provision was divided into three categories, namely, timetable, syllabus & external provision.

Timetable :

- No formal timetable. The First Years are met up to 3 times per year and by arrangement with individual teachers as required
- Small group or individual sessions by appointment

Syllabus :

- First Year day long induction
- Subject choice decisions
- Study Skills discussions
- Examination Technique

External Provision:

- Subject option information session for parents/guardians
- Parent Teacher Meetings

The meeting began with management and Ms.Landers (First Year Head) highlighting the importance of providing a guidance service to the first years. All present at the meeting were happy with the progress reported as I showed evidence and records of meetings with the first year group. I was asked what format these meetings took. I informed them that at each meeting (made with consultation with year head and teachers) the format involved discussion regarding a possible future career. This was seen as something to aspire to while all the time acknowledging this aspiration could change. This realisation was shared between myself and all the individual first years met. Allowing for this we moved on to look at first year subjects from two perspectives, namely, *subjects that I like* and *subjects that I could improve upon*. Also included in this were hobbies and interests as applied to each student. As a format I found that this worked well for each student and provided a solid first meeting foundation.

This was echoed by those present at the meeting. Strengths and weaknesses of students came up for discussion. It was felt that if this was concentrated on it would be of major benefit. It was also asked if these strengths and weaknesses could be looked at outside of the academic field. Discussion followed on harnessing social skills and how best to enhance school life for first year students outside the academic sphere. It was felt that this could be done through aspects of inclusion, awareness, communication and networking among staff in the school. It was noted that this was largely being done at the moment but nevertheless ongoing co-ordination of this by the guidance service in the school was warranted. Finally the aspect of study skills and exam technique were discussed. The question was asked how relevant study skills would be to the first year group and the query was raised also if there was a possibility of an information session on study skills for teachers to be able to impart the necessary knowledge to first years on how best to study. Following on from this it was mentioned with regard to exam technique the importance for teachers to be able to tell students how best to actually successfully complete an exam.

Appendix

Agenda for Guidance Review Meeting.

- Welcome
- HETAC Diploma in Whole School Guidance Planning
- Background to meeting
- Brief review of Guidance Inspection
- Analysis of first Year Guidance Service

Timetable

Syllabus

External Provision

- Provision for next meeting

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