



St Gerald’s DLS College
Guidance Plan

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1.0: Type of School

St. Gerald's College is an all-boys Catholic voluntary secondary school under the patronage of the Le Chéile Schools Trust.

2.0: Characteristic Spirit

The characteristic spirit of our school is based on the vision and values of the Le Chéile Charter. It is underpinned by a philosophy of education that has at its centre the unique dignity of the human person as a child of God. The school sees the interaction of people from different backgrounds—spiritual, ethnic, language, special needs—as a gift that will enrich the community of the school and promote the growth and learning of all. Therefore, the school values each student and their family. It welcomes and is sensitive to each one, seeking to respond to their individual needs.

2.1: School Specific Ethos

“St. Gerald's College, is a Lasallian Centre and the mission of the school is to give a human and Christian Education to the young, with special concern for the disadvantaged”.

St Gerald's College is specifically a Catholic School deriving its educational philosophy from Saint John Baptist de la Salle. As a Lasallian school, we have a special mission to nurture and support our most vulnerable students. In keeping with this philosophy, we welcome boys of all abilities.

St. John Baptist de la Salle believed that, in the person of the Lasallian teacher and within the Lasallian community of the school, a remedy was to be found for many of the ills of society. The need for such a remedy is just as evident today. Too many young people find themselves tossed about in a society which presents moral ambiguity and confusion. Too many are consumed by their wants rather than needs. For some, great peer pressure, low self-esteem and poverty of love and affection are a daily reality. The demands of everyday life may force many parents to spend less time and energy on the Christian formation of their children. This is the context within which Lasallian schools were conceived and in which a De La Salle College continues to exist today and to find meaning.



We are reminded of our College ethos in a tangible sense in the many images of our founder and the patron saint of all teachers, St. Jean Baptiste de la Salle.

With one hand the teacher is pointing his finger to give instruction and guidance to the pupil while the other hand is around the shoulder of the pupil demonstrating love, care and support. The pupil is listening to the teacher and is open to learning demonstrated with an open book. Lasallian teachers see themselves in the place of Christ and in the place of a loving parent concerned with the physical, spiritual and educational welfare of all of our students.

The staff at St. Gerald's College understands that they are working with young people who are still developing and growing. Our students still have a lot to learn and a lot to experience. We believe in these young people, and so we work collectively to create a place of opportunity where we encourage all of our young people to grow to excellence in everything they do. The Guidance Counsellor plays an integral part in the continuous developmental guidance process of each individual student. The Guidance Plan aims to assist the holistic development of all students so that they can 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.

3.0: Scope

Guidance in second-level schools refers to a range of learning experiences, provided in a developmental sequence, that assist students to develop self-management skills which will lead to effective choices and decisions about their lives. It encompasses the three separate, but interlinked areas, as set out by the NCGEt9:

- Personal and Social Development
- Educational Guidance
- Career Guidance

Counselling is a key part of the school guidance programme, offered on an individual or group basis as part of a developmental learning process and at moments of personal crisis. Counselling may include personal counselling, educational counselling, career counselling or combinations of these. The 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.

4.0: Rationale

Section 9 (c) of the Education Act, 1998 requires schools to “ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices”. In fulfilling this obligation, St Gerald’s College works towards developing a quality Guidance and Counselling service that is accessible and inclusive to all students.

5.0: AIMS OF THE SCHOOL GUIDANCE POLICY

Guidance is regarded as a core element of the school's overall programme. The aims of the school guidance plan are to help students to acquire the relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes that contribute to effective learning in school and across the lifespan. The guidance programme seeks to respond to the needs of the students at all stages of their education in the school. It encourages students to :

- Develop an awareness and acceptance of their strengths and weaknesses.
- Identify and explore opportunities
- Grow in independence and take responsibility for themselves.
- Make informed choices about their lives and follow through on those choices.
- Acquire the competency to consult the Guidance Counsellor with regards to concerns of a personal or educational nature.

A School Guidance Plan provides an essential framework for delivery of the school’s guidance programme. Successful planning ensures a structured response to the educational, vocational and personal/social needs of the students. Whole School Guidance Planning is a work in progress and will be monitored, evaluated and reviewed regularly.



6.0: Personnel involved

Personnel involved in the Provision of Guidance

- Guidance Counsellor
- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- Year Heads
- Class Tutors
- SEN Team
- R.E. Teachers
- SPHE Teachers

This policy sets out the school's response to the current needs of the students in the area of Guidance and Counselling. The Guidance Counsellor is seen as the Co-ordinator of whole school guidance activities and the central person responsible for the continuous developmental guidance process.

7.0: The Role of the Guidance Counsellor

The three key areas in which the counsellor has a major role and responsibility are:

1. Personal Counselling
2. Career Counselling
3. Educational Counselling

Operating in these areas the guidance counsellor works in conjunction with the students, the parents/guardians, the management of the school, and the staff of the school. Whilst the guidance counsellor has the specific training in educational, career and personal counselling, it is only through a collaborative approach that students experiencing difficulties in any of these areas will be given the necessary support and strategies which will allow them to overcome their difficulties and to optimise their learning.

The counsellor relates to school management through meetings with the Pastoral Care Team on matters affecting individual students requiring intervention. The counsellor also relates with Year Heads, Tutors, Learning Support Teachers, Subject Teachers, Parents and others as



appropriate. The counsellor has a role in informing the school management and staff of the operation of the guidance department, in contributing to the development and evaluation of appropriate programmes, in administering tests and interpreting their results, in managing information, in administering the guidance service and in liaison with referral agencies and professionals outside the school.

7.1: Personal Counselling

Being informed by the theoretical background of counselling which takes systems into account as influential in the life of an adolescent, the ways in which the counsellor fulfils this role include:

- Publicising to the students and at parents' meetings the role of the Guidance Counsellor and the Guidance Counsellor's availability to individual students for an appointment at any time, within the framework of guidance hours available.
- Students and/or parents are free to request an appointment with the School Guidance Counsellor.
- The Guidance Counsellor may also initiate appointments with pupils, teachers and parents when particular circumstances arise indicating that a pupil may be in need of counselling on a personal issue which impinges on their school life.
- The Guidance Counsellor is consulted by school management and pastoral care personnel on such issues
- Each student in the school can have an individual appointment with the Guidance Counsellor to discuss personal and/or career related matters.

7.2: Career Counselling

The ways in which the Guidance Counsellor fulfils this role include:

- The Guidance Counsellor will address all students in 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 6th Year, the counsellor will give presentations which will cover specific issues such as preparation for work experience, interest inventories, preparation for subject choice for the Leaving Certificate, information on the education system and an explanation of the wide variety of 3rd level destinations available and the routes by



which they are accessed, differential aptitude tests, computer-based career research programmes etc.

- The Guidance Counsellor also takes responsibility for advising the students on the completion of UCAS applications to the British third level system along with writing their academic references.

7.3: Educational Counselling

The ways in which the Guidance Counsellor fulfils this role include:

- Liaising with the Principal, Year Heads, Tutors, Learning Support Teacher, Administration Staff and Subject Teachers concerning pupils who require intervention.
- Offering those pupils counselling with regard to study techniques, educational planning and personal organization.
- Liaise with Learning Support Teacher to identify students requiring further attention.
- Providing guidance and information to students and parents at appropriate stages in their progress through meetings, e.g. prior to Transition Year, prior to subject choice for the Leaving Certificate and prior to CAO application deadline.
- Being available to pupils who have left the school to offer advice after the Leaving Certificate results have been issued, i.e. at the beginning of the new school term.
- The objectives of the guidance programme are not only framed by reference to the legislative requirements, but are also referenced by the good practices disseminated by the Institute of Guidance Counsellors and the National Centre for Guidance in Education. Guidance in the school is viewed as a continual development process which begins prior to the entry of the student into St Gerald's College and concludes after the student has left the school.
- Section 3 : Current Guidance Provision and Programme

8.0: Current Guidance Provision

8.1: Junior Cycle

The Guidance Counsellor takes first year students for an introduction to the Guidance Service.



The First Years students also receive help and support in choosing what subjects to retain in second year and in the implications of their decision. The Guidance Counsellor delivers a presentation on Subject Choice to all First Year classes.

In Second Year, subject levels for Irish and Maths are decided upon. The Guidance Counsellor will advise any student having difficulty in making this decision.

Third Year students receive support in their choices for Transition year and in what implications this might have at Leaving Certificate level and for third level.

8.2: Senior Cycle

Transition Year students receive advice regarding subject choices and levels and how these may affect their choice of career. Scheduled talks are also given to students with regard to careers. A schedule of these presentations is put on the Careers Noticeboard month by month.

5th and 6th year class groups are each timetabled for one careers class per week. LCA is timetabled for one Guidance class per week and two classes of Vocational Preparation.

Each senior student receives one careers appointments with the Guidance Counsellor. If a student requires more than one visit, this can be organised by arrangement with the Guidance Counsellor. It is hoped that all Students in Sixth Year will have at least one appointment with the Guidance Counsellor before Christmas.

All other students in Senior Cycle are welcome to meet with the Guidance Counsellor on a needs basis.

9.0: Current Guidance Programme

9.1: Introduction

The Guidance curriculum may be divided into two components:

- Formal
- Informal
- Formal Guidance



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

- Individual contact of a personal counselling nature and careers/vocational guidance.
- Classroom guidance delivered in regular weekly classes to senior cycle students, rotating modules, class group or year group intervention as required.

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 form an integral part of Informal guidance.

9.2: Junior Cycle Aims

- To provide for the personal, social and educational needs of all students
- To develop self awareness
- To identify students in need and encourage them to avail of the services offered by the school Guidance and Counselling service.o promote good study and examination techniques.
- To offer assessments to facilitate informed decision making.

9.3: Senior Cycle Aims:

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



9.4: REACH+

The Reach + Career and College Programme is the most advanced career guidance programme available in Ireland. It covers a comprehensive range of topics designed to help your son/daughter prepare for the transition from school to either work or college. It is managed by the school guidance counsellor, is full of engaging activities, and requires active participation by the student.

The programme encourages students to match their aptitude, values, interests and personality to career pathways and course opportunities. The programme includes a substantial online learning environment where students can complete and store all of their career research.

Key elements of the programme...

SELF ASSESSMENT

This section includes an innovative and well planned suite of self-assessment exercises designed to encourage a rich understanding of the key factors that influence career choice. Activities promote a reflection on the learning outcomes from these, and their implications for future Career and College choice.

CAREER PLANNING

Several activities are designed to develop 'Career Awareness' , and to promote effective research and learning skills. These include setting realistic goals, understanding the consequences of choices and action planning.

STUDY SKILLS

REACH+ provides a suite of tools to help a student achieve their potential by recognising individual learning styles and study behaviours. The programme includes a study skills test and extensive tips for improving performance. Students are also encouraged to log their exam performance for all subjects over the course of their last two years in school, and use their actual exam results for each term exam as a basis for setting realistic targets for their next exam.



WORLD OF WORK

This section has a range of activities designed to develop an understanding of the working world. Students explore and research career sectors that interest them, and the occupations associated with them. Job seeking skills, including CV and cover letter preparation are provided along with advice on how to prepare for job interviews.

WORLD OF EDUCATION

This section looks in detail at the college and course choices available after school. Qualifications are explained and checklists for college entry are provided. Students are encouraged and shown how to search, evaluate and assess if courses are suitable for them. Preparation for filling in the CAO and making other college applications are covered in detail.

As a parent you can view your son/daughter's progress with them by discussing the many reports produced by the programme, and understand in a deeper way the career planning process that is supported by the guidance counsellor.

The REACH+ programme is continuously updated with relevant and timely content. Access to the online learning environment (the Career File) is through the internet and hence is always available.

REACH+ is produced by CareersPortal.ie



		TY	5th	6th
1 Career Awareness				
1	Choosing a Career	x		
2	Career Timelines	x		
3	Five Principles	x		
2 Dreams & Ambitions				
4	My Dreams	x		
5	What Inspires Me	x		
6	Carpe Diem	x		
7	My Talents		x	
8	Find what you love		x	
3 Personal and Career Values				
9	Jobs and Values	x		
10	What do you Value		x	
11	Values and Career Choices		x	
4 Personality				
12	Personality Test	x		
13	My Personality	x		
14	My Personality Mind Map	x		
5 Career Interests				
15	What would I like to do?		x	
16	Career Interest Test		x	
17	Occupations and Career Interests 1		x	
18	Occupations and Career Interests 2		x	
19	Class Interests Profile		x	
20	My Career Interests		x	
6 World of Work				
21	Not a lot to ask?		x	
22	Why do people work	x		
23	Future Generations			X



7 Career Sectors			
24	Career Sectors	x	
25	Career Project - Sector Investigation	x	
8 Career Investigation			
26	Career Investigation	x	
9 Qualifications & Levels			
27	Qualifications and jobs	x	
10 Preparation for Career Fairs			
28	Checklist and Planner*	x	x
29	Exhibition Report*	x	x
11 College Open Days - Third Level			
30	Talking the Talk	x	
31	Open Day Plan*	x	x
32	College Visit Evaluation*	x	x
12 CAO Choices			

10.0: Leaving Cert Applied

Module Title : Guidance

General Aims:

This module aims:

- to enable the student to become more aware of her/his interests, skills and personality attributes and relate these to different fields of work
- to help the student determine her/his own strengths or weaknesses and relate these to working life
- to provide opportunities for the student to identify general areas of employment that suit her/his own skills, qualities and interests
- to enable the student to access and use relevant careers information
- to help the student develop an action plan in relation to her/his chosen career
- to encourage the student to review and evaluate the effect of maturation, work placement experience, and increased workplace and personal awareness on her/his career interests.

**Objectives:**

This mandatory module is designed to help the student become more aware of his/her interests, aptitudes and skills with regard to the world of work. It also seeks to facilitate the process of matching and applying these interests, aptitudes and skills to particular career areas and the world of work in general. It is intended that a guidance counsellor should deliver this module. The module is designed to complement but not to replace individual career planning interviews between the guidance counsellor and individual students.

Resoucces :

- Work placement
- Whiteboard
- Computer and overhead projector
- Internet : Careersportal, Classroom Guidance, Qualifax, Youtube
- Interest Inventories : Careersportal
- College Prospectuses
- Guest Speakers from Sólás and various HEIs
- Open Day excursions

Units For This Module :

Unit 1: The student and the world of work

Unit 2: The student and one particular field of work

Unit 3: Information building

Unit 4: Career Action Plan

Methodologies :

- Teacher talk – Note giving
- PowerPoint Presentations
- Videos
- Groupwork
- Discussions
- Questions and Answers



Range of AFL Strategies :

- Check homework,
- Key terms test,
- Oral and written questioning
- Think pair share
- Evaluation Form

Content:

Unit 1: The Student and the World of Work

The student will be able to:

1. identify her/his aims and expectations in relation to the Leaving Certificate Applied course
2. recognise career interests through completion and interpretation of an occupational interest questionnaire
3. distinguish different types of work and employment
4. demonstrate an understanding of what people gain from working
5. identify qualities which employers value in workers

Unit 2 : The Student and one particular field of work

The student will be able to:

1. list some of their own personal qualities and their relevance to working life
2. complete a checklist re his/her own skills
3. outline their ideal job, the type of work it entails, and how suitable they think they are to fill it
4. research one particular chosen career and present their findings.

Unit 3 : Information Building :

The student will be able to:

1. report on information obtained on a number of visits to career exhibitions, colleges of further education, training centres, etc.
2. list the career and training opportunities that are available as a progression from the Leaving Certificate Applied



3. complete and score an interest questionnaire (other than that completed in Unit 1) and discuss the outcome
4. complete a checklist or questionnaire on learning styles and/or psychometric tests and discuss the outcome with the guidance counsellor.

Unit 4 : Career Action Plan

The student will be able to:

1. identify possible careers that would suit his/her own skills, qualities and interests and to suggest at least three areas of employment that link to these characteristics
2. devise a personal career action plan
3. prepare for interviews

Key assignments to be completed :

- As part of a group, I designed, carried out and reported on a survey on some aspects of working life.
- I presented a report on an investigation which I carried out on a particular career or field of work.
- I reported on my learning from a visit to a careers exhibition, college, training centre or place of employment.
- I have compiled a personal action plan in relation to work/education/training covering at least the next year.

Cross-curriculum links: Module Descriptor P.2

Evaluation:

At the end of this module, the students will be given an evaluation form on this module which will be submitted and kept by the LCA Co-Ordinator.



11.0: Procedures

11.1: Mental Health

Mental Health is related to all of the other dimensions of health and is defined as ‘a state of well-being in which the individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community’ (WHO, 2001).

Schools play a very important role in positive mental health promotion to enhance student’s life chances. Students with good school connectedness are less likely to experience subsequent mental health issues and are more likely to have good educational outcomes. Schools are one of the key settings for the promotion of the mental health of young people.

The mental health and well-being of our children is critical to success in school and life. In keeping with the ethos of St Gerald’s College to provide a holistic education in a caring and supportive environment, St Gerald’s College aims to promote Mental Health among students and staff. An activity involving the promotion of Mental Health is held every year in the College.

In April 2017, St Gerald’s College acted as an Anchor School for the annual Cycle Against Suicide event promoting the message ‘That it’s ok not to feel ok and it’s absolutely ok to ask for help’.

This event was held over May Bank Holiday Weekend.

The College also participates in the Annual SchoolsGoOrange Campaign.

- Positive mental health enables young people to live fulfilling lives. Promoting the mental health and well-being of our young people is a shared responsibility and is everybody’s business. We have an inclusive, friendly open policy in the school where students are encouraged to talk to any member of staff about any concern they may have.
- Schools are in a unique position to promote mental health and emotional wellbeing and to identify young people experiencing emotional distress. Boards of management, school leaders and teachers play a central role providing leadership and direction in implementing a comprehensive and integrated approach to mental health promotion.



- Support for students in St Gerald's College is available from Subject Teachers, Class Heads, Year Heads, Guidance Counsellor, Deputy Principal, Principal, Board of Management and Ancilliary Staff.
- It is important to recognise that mental health and well-being are not the sole responsibility of schools. Parents and the wider school community have complementary roles each supporting the other. Fostering a sense of community and belonging in an integrated way is essential to best support the needs of children and staff in schools.
- St Gerald's College will keep parents/Guardians involved in any decisions affecting their son and all parents/.guardians are encouraged to share any concerns with us.
- Where necessary, students are referred to outside agencies. This is done in consultation with parents.
- Extra curricular activities are promoted within the College.
- Mental health promotion is the cornerstone of suicide prevention and a key area within the broader area of health promotion in schools, as exemplified by the Health Promoting School (HPS) concept and process.
- Issues around depression, suicide, bereavement that may arise in class should be referred to the Guidance Counsellor.

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. St Gerald's College has implemented the programme for First Year Students. Teachers will work on a rotational basis for 8 weeks with each class. The Wellbeing Programme will consist of Digital Media, Digital Citizenship, Guidance and Sports Psychology. Introduction of one Wellbeing class in First Year. The Guidance component will be delivered by the Guidance Counsellor.

A mental Health noticeboard has been erected and can be found in the Foyer, a prominent area of the College which contains information on mental health services available locally.

11.2 Referral

Internal Referral:

- Students can self refer by requesting an appointment with the Guidance Counsellor



- Year Heads or Tutors can refer students for individual support by liaising with the Guidance Counsellor and requesting an appointment for individual students
- School staff and parents/guardians are also welcome to contact the Guidance Department if they have concerns.

External Referral:

The Principal, as the Designated Liaison Person (DLP), in consultation with the School Guidance Counsellor, may refer to outside agencies such as the HSE, Psychological Support Services or specific services in the local area such as Mindspace.

Such referrals are made in consultation with parents/guardians.

11.3: Appointments

Arranging CAO Appointments

- The choice of career path is the responsibility of each individual student. It is the policy of this school that each student should be adequately prepared to make this choice. The Education Act 1998 states that a school shall use its resources to
- “Section 9 (c) ..Ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices”
- In complying with this each student is encouraged in developing her full potential and in making a Career choice that reflects her goals.
- Where a student chooses to apply for third level education to a CAO affiliated college it is the policy of the school that each student is supported through the CAO application process. While it is the ultimate responsibility of each student to make the actual application the school will endeavour to support each student through the process. The Guidance Counsellor will be available to assist students with their CAO Application.
- Career appointments are posted on the Careers notice board at the beginning of every week. A written appointment is given to each student which will be presented to the Subject teacher.
- Appointments are arranged with the Guidance Counsellor outside of career class time. The Guidance Counsellor checks the timetable of the student and tries to take the student during a non exam subject if possible.



- The Guidance Counsellor will then fill in an Appointment Slip with the meeting details. The student must present this note to the Subject Teacher before attending appointment.
- Parents/Guardians make appointments with the Guidance Counsellor by telephoning the school. Appointments are conducted during the school day or outside school hours, depending on the situation.
- All parties are requested to inform each other if a cancellation is necessary.
- On occasion, the Guidance Counsellor may request another staff member e.g. Year Head, subject teacher or/and management to be present at a meeting. The student is always invited in for whole or part of the meeting with approval of Parents/Guardians. This gives the student responsibility, ownership and inclusion in the meeting outcomes. Notes are kept of all meetings by the Guidance Counsellor.

Each student is entitled to “adequate guidance” under the Education Act 1998. This will vary from student to student with some students requiring more time than others.

11.4: Personal Counselling Appointments

Personal Counselling appointments may arise for a variety of reasons

- A student may be referred to the Guidance Counsellor by a teacher
- A parent may ask for some intervention by the Guidance Counsellor
- A student may approach the Guidance Counsellor directly and ask for an appointment

Counselling has as its objective the empowerment of students so that they can make decisions, solve problems, address behavioural issues, develop coping strategies and resolve difficulties they may be experiencing.

Possible reasons for an appointment may include:

- Personal problems
- Family problems
- Relationship problems
- Coping skills
- Motivation



- Making choices

12.0: Confidentiality

Counselling relationships themselves and information that is disclosed in counselling relationships are kept confidential. However, if a situation arises where the school feel a student is at risk, the Principal or Guidance Counsellor consults the student, school management, parents/guardians and relevant agencies, if necessary.

Students are encouraged to discuss their problem with their parent/guardian where appropriate. At the beginning of the counselling contract students are always informed that what is said in the counselling session is confidential between the counsellor and the student UNLESS the counsellor feels that the pupil is a danger to themselves (including eating disorders) or anyone else, or at risk. Confidentiality will not apply in the case of abuse (Child Protection Guidelines definition applies here), or if a student discloses an intention to commit a crime or when a court orders a counsellor to make records available.

13.0: Ethical considerations and Accountability

The Guidance Counselling Service is subject to all relevant legal requirements, to the provisions of the 1998 Education Act, to Department of Education and Science Directives, and to the school's Ethos and Educational Philosophy. The Guidance Counsellor, like all other members of staff in the school, is entrusted with the care of students in "loco parentis" and accepts the responsibilities of this position, keeping the students welfare to the forefront at all times. The guidance department is aware of its responsibility to our students, to the school, to our own profession, to ourselves and to the implementation of this policy. To this end we will partake in professional peer supervision, which will provide support and feedback for my professional welfare. The Guidance Counsellors also abides by the Institute of Guidance Counsellor's Code of Ethics.

The School Guidance Counsellors abide by the 'Child Protection Guidelines for Post Primary Schools'.

14.0: Information

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



15.0: Support

The Guidance Counsellor provides support to students, parents, teachers, and principal and referral agencies in assisting the personal, social, career and educational developmental of students. Such support may include advocacy on behalf of a student. Support also refers to assistance in the planning and development of programmes which will be beneficial to students.

16.0: Classroom Guidance Activities

Providing classroom based learning experiences that are relevant to the objectives of the school guidance programme.

17.0: Record Keeping

Record keeping is an integral part of the administration of the Guidance and Counselling Service in the College. All records will be kept in accordance with the 'Data Protection Act'. Appropriate coding of information will take place to protect clients. Recording information that could lead to misinterpretation and misuse should be avoided as well as any form of conjecture.

The Principal will be made aware of the location of sensitive and confidential files

18.0 Subject Choice Procedures

Subject choices have to be taken by students on two different occasions

- Junior cycle – after the taster programme 1st year (Sept. – Nov)
- Senior cycle – Transition Year.

Subject bands vary from year to year based and is based on the following :

- student choices
- available resources.

In keeping with our policy of supporting students through the process of developing their full potential, the Guidance Counsellor provides help and support at each stage of the decision-making process and is available to students for advice and guidance.



19.0: Students dropping a subject/ changing subject level

A student may be referred to the Guidance Counsellor in the event of that student wishing to drop a subject, to ensure they understand the implications, if any of their actions.

Equally in the event of a change from higher to ordinary level or ordinary to foundation, a student may be referred to the Guidance Counsellor. She will consult with the relevant subject teacher. A change of subject level form/dropping subject must be completed and returned.

20.0: Study Skills

The organisation of a Study Skills Seminar is a post of responsibility in St Gerald's College. A seminar takes place for all First Year students in September and it is optional for other students within Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle. The Guidance Counsellor addresses Fifth Year and Sixth Year students on Study SKills in Career Guidance classes.

Study Skills is part of the SPHE Curriculum at Junior cycle.

21.0: Assessments

All our assessment procedures will be dictated by the above principle and a variety of procedures will be used to assist students, parents and teachers for a variety of purposes, for example, prediction of academic performance, categorisation of occupational interests, assessment of behaviour, educational and career planning, personal and social development. School assessment and public examination results will supplement this information. The Guidance Counsellor with the aid of the above information will be better equipped to assist the student in decision making, problem solving, behavioural change and with developing skills for coping with ever changing circumstances.

Assessments used in St Gerald's College have included DATs in the past but will include Eirquest and Cambridge Profile Test from 2017. These tests will be conducted with our TY students in late 2017. Each student will receive their results individually and will be used in conjunction with interest assessments to assist students with career choice. Students conduct interest assessment on careers websites such as the Reach Programme on www.careersportal.ie and www.qualifax.ie



21.1: CAT for Incoming 1st Years

Cognitive Abilities Test are carried out with incoming 1st years students as means of identifying the student's individual strengths, needs and learning preferences, providing a complete profile of their ability and seek to assist us in facilitating a smooth transition from primary to post primary school for the individual students. The use of CAT's help to inform target-setting, the development of individual learning plans and aids the implementation of more timely intervention strategies, while providing a sound basis for comparisons over time. These assessment can be carried out by the Principal, Guidance Counsellor or/and SEN Co-ordinator.

22.0: Speakers

It is normal for speakers from individual colleges to give talks to Senior class groups These talks are both informative and useful as they give the students an overview of the courses are available in different colleges and they give the students an overview of third level education.

Other speakers are arranged subject to demand and in consultation with the students, staff and management.

23.0: Attendance at Open Days/Career Events

At the start of the academic year, arrangements are made in consultation with subject teachers and management to attend appropriately chosen activities. Students attend by prior agreement with parents. The Guidance Counsellor corresponds in writing to parents, guardians either in consultation with management as appropriate (on behalf of school with co -signature of principal) or directly and confidentially, or in seeking permission to attend outside events/or invitation to parents to attend Guidance related school events.

Staff are advised by prior agreement, via the Career Notice Board and by way of intra-school announcement at break time.

Students are continuously reminded of on-going career events by several avenues:

- Year Group Noticeboard
- Intercom announcements
- School Email
- Newsletter



- Via Career representatives

In preparation for these out-of- class learning experiences, students are advised/reminded a few days beforehand of the location of the venue, travel arrangements, meeting point, time of attendance, school identification requirements, uniform-non uniform

24.0: Supplementary Entry Routes

24.1: DARE & HEAR

The Supplementary Information Form for applicants with a disability or specific learning difficulty has two purposes: to facilitate applicants in alerting HEIs of any special needs and any facilities that might be required; and to supply information to be considered for supplementary admission procedures including the DARE scheme. The HEAR form should be completed by applicants who wish to be considered on the basis of socio-economic disadvantage. The Guidance Counsellor prepares DARE Applications in consultation with the SEN Co-ordinator.

24.2: NUI Exemptions and other HEI Exemptions :

It is important to note that exemptions are a separate matter to supplying HEIs with information about a disability or specific learning difficulty. If an applicant, for any reason, is seeking exemptions from minimum entry requirements (e.g. exemptions from Irish or modern language requirements) then contact is made with the the admissions offices of the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) he is applying to. The Guidance Counsellor ensures that every student is catered for in this regard.

24.3: Notice Board

An important resource in information dissemination to students, staff and parents is the Careers Notice Board which is located outside the Secretary's Office.

All relevant information under the diverse areas of guidance is displayed on this notice board.. This is an effective means of communicating with the wider school population.



25.0: Summary of Services

The services provided by the Guidance and Counselling Department can be summarised as follows:

- Individual counselling to all students on request or by referral.
- Class for Third Year students in preparation for work placement, senior cycle and subject choice.
- Psychometric testing: CAT 4/CPT and Eirquest, Interest Inventories.
- First Year Induction Program and Mentoring System
- Classroom Guidance for 5th and 6th Year students to assist them with career choice e.g. CAO , Colleges of Further Education, Apprenticeships, Defence Forces etc
- Individual Guidance meetings for 6th Year students to assist them with career choice
- CAO choice, HEAR/DARE applications, UCAS application etc
- Attendance at organised Open Days
- Guest Speakers e.g. Higher Education Institutions, Colleges of Further Education, Solas
- Parents' Information Evenings on:
 - Subject Choice (Third Year & Transition Year)
 - Open Evening (Incoming First Years)
 - CAO/UCAS/FETAC Info night (Sixth Years)

26.0: Career Guidance Plan 2017-2018 Month by Month

26.1: September/October

- CAO Packs – distribute
- Ensure TY/LCA Students have Work Experience
- Order Reach+ workbook for TY students (TY fund)
- Induction program for 1st year students – Fifth Year Mentoring Programme.
- Review Department Plan
- Talk to 6th years – UCAS, Irish Exemptions, HEAR/DARE
- Liaise with SEN coordinator – DARE / Exemption Applicants
- Prioritise students applying to UCAS (earlier closing date)
- Begin seeing 6th years individually (review summer reports)



- Begin TY, 5th and 6th year guidance classes – review schemes
- Post important notifications – key dates
- Request from admissions officers to visit school
- Review any new students to the school
- Study Skills – Assistant Post Responsibility
- Re-emphasise referral system and routine within whole school -clarify procedures
- Establish relationships with key staff for referrals (Year Heads/ Form Teachers and SEN Team)
- Establish report and record keeping structure
- Check in with students receiving counselling last year
- Register with Cycle Against Suicide Ambassador Programme
- Limerick Open Days / Davitt College

26.2: November/December

- Parents night for 6th Year students (Letter Home)
- CAO Conference
- Open Day Season - notify students
- Talks from main feeder colleges/ Solas
- Continue seeing 6th years
- Stress Management and Motivation Presentation for 6th years
- Counselling Referrals
- UCAS applications – student references / personal statements
- Cambridge Profile Testing/ Eir

26.3: January/February

- January 15th UCAS deadline
- January 20th CAO online deadline for discounted rate
- February 1st CAO deadline
- Meeting with 6th years prioritised
- Help with HEAR and DARE applications prioritised
- PLC Open Days



- PLC applications prioritised (online)
- Incoming first year – parents evening
- Beginning subject choice process
- TY CPT and Eirquest results
- Meeting with 5th years about importance of subject choice (prepare handout and Presentation)
- Meeting with incoming 5th year parents about subject choice and transition to senior cycle
- Student references

26.4: March/April

- Subject choice follow up
- Counselling appointments continued
- Interviews and portfolios for restricted courses
- Grants – SUSI applications open
- Begin meeting 5th year students
- Student references

26.5: May

- 1st of May CAO re -opens
- Talk to 6th years about results and offers
- Stress management and exam techniques with 6th years
- Talk to 5th years about using summer wisely
- Late PLC applications
- Counselling appointments continued
- Class visit to Third Year students to discuss Work Placement. Prepare Work Placement Pack for all students.
- Write in key dates for September



27.0: Work Experience for Transition Year Students and LCA Students

The Guidance Counsellor will prepare students for Work Experience in May of Third Year. The Guidance Counsellor will monitor students on a regular basis.

28.0: The Mentoring Programme

- The aim of the programme is that a group of four or five First Year students have a Fifth Year who is their mentor.
- The role of the mentor is to work in conjunction with the class prefect, and help with any issues or concerns that the First Year students may have.
- The mentor is also there to encourage the First Years, and to refer them to their tutor, year head or Guidance Counsellor if they are in need of extra support.
- The mentors meet with their groups at least once a week for a chat and check-in to see how they are getting on.

29.0: Professional development

Continuing Professional development for the Guidance Counsellor Supervision for counselling:

‘Supervision is a working alliance between a supervisor and counsellor in which the counsellor can offer an account or recording of her work; reflect of her work; reflects on it; receives feedback, and where appropriate, guidance ‘ (Inskipp & Proctor, 1993)

The Guidance Counsellor has been given Tuesday afternoon to avail of supervision and CPD and avails of this through the Westmeath branch of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors.

30.0 CPD Record

- The Guidance Counsellor completed 20 hours of CPD on Mindfulness with The Irish Mindfulness Institute in January/February 2017.
- Attended REACH+ Training in 2016



31.0: Guidance Resources

- Guidance Counsellor's office and classroom
- Phone
- Computer networked to the main school network
- Broadband available in office (etc)
- Notice boards
- Personal Laptop
- Use of computer room for class and resources

32.0: Links with other policies :

- Pastoral Care Policy
- SPHE Policy
- Anti- Bullying Policy
- Critical Incident Policy
- Code of Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- SEN Policy
- Homework Policy
- Substance Abuse Policy
- RSE Policy

The Guidance Plan should be read in conjunction with these policies

33.0: Guidance Department Goals 2017/18

- To set up a Guidance and Counselling Website
- To establish better links with the SPHE Department and students at Junior Cycle
- To set up a Careers Library in the newly refurbished De La Salle Room
- To attend more inservice