

Moyle Park College



Whole School Guidance Plan

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The Whole School Guidance Plan is designed specifically for Moyle Park College, a boys voluntary secondary school established in 1957 by the Marist Brothers. The Whole School Guidance Plan involves all aspects of school life and as such it is a whole school activity. At present, the school has approximately 723 students and provides a range of educational programmes to cater for the needs of students. These programmes include—

- Junior Certificate School Programme;
- Junior Certificate Programme;
- Transition Year (Optional);
- Leaving Certificate Programme;
- Leaving Certificate Applied Programme;
- Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme.

The college is located within the community and is non-selective in its intake of students. Interestingly, the College motto is *Respice finem* (look to the end) which conveys the school's philosophy of setting objectives and ideals and working towards them. We expect each student to strive to achieve his full potential as a person: academically, physically, morally socially and spiritually.

The College's Counselling Service and the Guidance Plan is in keeping with its Religious and Educational Philosophy and reflects in its aim the *school vision statement* to educate students for:-

| | |
|---|--|
| <i>Personal Integrity</i> | helping each student to develop a core value system; challenging each student to live the values in a community context. |
| <i>Self Worth / Self Esteem</i> | includes the intrinsic worth of self and others; by giving experience of success, academic or otherwise; maximising opportunities for students to develop skills, aptitudes and abilities. |
| <i>Community and Social Responsibility</i> | Developing their sense of personal accountability to self and others. |
| <i>Participation</i> | Maximising the appropriate involvement of all parents, students, teachers and management, in the school community. |
| <i>Justice / Honesty</i> | Developing students' critical understanding and a sense of social responsibility in the school and community. |
| <i>Independence / Freedom</i> | Developing students' capacity to think independently and to have the self-confidence to manage the future, (work, relationships etc.). In an interdependent way knowing that each person's action affects others |
| <i>Wonder</i> | To let students have a sense of awe and a questioning stance about self, life and the created universe |

While a strong emphasis is placed on academic standards, the school community aims to participate in the development of each pupil into a mature, responsible and caring citizen, equipped with life skills and qualifications that will enable him to live a fulfilling and happy life. In achieving this, the Guidance Counsellors play an important part in the areas of counselling and guidance as well as involvement in the Pastoral Care programme. Our students are encouraged to become lifelong, independent learners.

2. Definition, Aim, Objectives and Personnel involved in the Whole School Guidance Plan

The Whole Guidance Plan aims to –

- a. state the objectives and priorities of the provision of Whole School Guidance;
- b. enhance the provision of Whole School Guidance by targeting the needs of the pupils;
- c. Focus the school's resources where they are most needed;
- d. Address the needs of students at varying stages of the secondary school cycle;
- e. Provide a comprehensive counselling service for the school community.

In brief, the Plan recognises that Guidance and Counselling is -

- an integral component of the organisation of a secondary school;
- pupil-centred; and
- Available to the entire school community.

The programme aims to reach all students in the school system and to deal with all students in a diverse and multicultural manner in order to aid them in developing their full potential. The programme also aims to provide a framework for the delivery of the school's guidance programme and to ensure a structured response to all students' personal, social, educational and career guidance needs. The plan is inclusive, providing for the junior, senior, minority, special education needs of all students.

The guidance and counselling needs of each year-group have been identified as follows;

- **First Year:**
 - Assessing the needs of the individual student and providing programmes to respond to these needs;
 - Providing support for students and parents during the transition from Primary to Secondary school;
 - Monitoring student progress;
 - Personal Counselling;
 - Liaise with the Well-being, Special Educational Needs (SEN) and SPHE departments.

- **Second Year**
 - Responding to the educational and personal needs of individual students as outlined in the programme below;
 - Monitoring student progress;
 - Personal Counselling;
 - Liaise with the Well-being, SEN and SPHE departments.
- **Third Year**
 - Senior Cycle Options;
 - Personal Counselling;
 - Monitoring student progress;
 - Liaise with the Well-being, SEN and SPHE departments;
 - Subject Choice;
 - Study Skills;
 - Psychometric Testing.
- **Transition Year**
 - Subject Choice and Senior Cycle Options
 - Preparation for the world of work/career investigation
 - Personal Counselling
- **Fifth Year**
 - Career Investigation
 - Preparation for the World Of Work
 - Personal Counselling
- **Sixth Year**
 - Career choice
 - The Transition from Secondary School to third level;
 - Personal Counselling.

In addition, as part of the Careers programme 6th year students are encouraged to attend Open Days that are organised by Third Level institutions. Students are encouraged to attend Open Days that are organised at weekends.

Attendance at Open Days will be confined to sixth year students only. The school views Open Days as a good way to meet and speak with lecturers and current students, discuss study plans, and find out more about what the different institutions can offer.

3. The Objectives of the Whole School Guidance Programme

The objective is to help students acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes that contribute to effective learning in school and across the life span. Furthermore, the programme aims to provide a threefold caring and supportive service which caters for each student's Personal and Social, Educational and Vocational needs.

Personal and Social Needs through developing-

- self awareness;
- decision making skills;
- coping strategies.

Educational Needs through developing-:

- informed subject choice and subject level;
- encourage motivation and learning via study skills;
- provision of learning support.

Vocational needs through developing-

- job opportunities;
- vocational education and training;
- interview preparation, career research and career/course information.

In summary the objectives for Junior and Senior Cycle are;

| Junior Cycle | Senior Cycle |
|---|--|
| <p>To encourage each student to-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• develop an understanding of themselves as individuals and in relation to others;• become aware of their strengths and weaknesses;• provide programmes and support systems for students with emotional difficulties e.g. anger management;• acquire the competency to consult with Guidance Counsellor and Pastoral care staff with regard to personal and educational concerns. | <p>To encourage each student to-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• develop an awareness of interests, aptitudes and personality traits in themselves and others;• develop career awareness and develop employment readiness;• acquire the skills to investigate the world of work in relation to knowledge of self and to make informed career decisions;• assume responsibility for their own vocational journey;• view career development as a continuous process.• To acquire the competency to consult with Guidance Counsellor and Pastoral care staff with regard to personal and educational concerns. |

4. Whole school guidance team

| Person | Role |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Principal/Deputy Principal | Arranges appropriate conditions for successful school guidance |
| Guidance counsellors | Provides leadership in school guidance |
| Teachers | Advise students on subject specialisms |
| Students | Identify their own guidance needs |
| School Completion Programme | Provide programmes and resources to reduce risk of early school leaving. |
| Form tutor & Year Heads | Work with student groups and look after discipline, attendance and individual needs. |
| Chaplain | Provide for pastoral care needs. |
| JCSP/LCA/LCVP co-ordinators | Target students with individual needs and cater for them to the most suitable programmes. |
| Student Council | Voice the concerns of students and work with the school management in making decisions. |
| SPHE department | Educate the students in the area of social, personal and health education. |
| Learning Support Team | Cater for the academic needs of students. |
| School Completion Programme | Focuses on targeting and providing supports to students identified to be most at risk of early school leaving |

5. Theoretical Framework

Counselling will be offered on an individual or small group basis. The focus of counselling is on the personal, educational, and vocational issues, individually or in small groups or as part of supervised peer counselling. The guidance counselling service will provide a caring context for counselling, engage in advocacy where appropriate and support young people in personal crises. In this regard –

Individual Counselling is an interactive process to help the student to understand his personal reality in a safe, supportive environment and help him deal responsibility with his needs.

Group Counselling is the responsibility of the group under the direction of the Counsellor or other qualified adult. Depending on the context and the group this can be the most effective form of counselling for individual members, where students can learn that they are not alone in their experience and receive healing from one another. All group counselling will only take place where there is proper supervision and permission.

Peer Counselling involves students giving one to one support to fellow students in a helping context which is conducted under the

supervision of the Guidance Counsellor and with the permission of parent or guardian.

The Guidance Counsellor must at all times be sensitive to the developmental stages of the students. As in all counselling, respect for the integrity of the individual student is paramount and appropriate confidentiality must prevail. Parents will be made feel welcome and afforded an opportunity to develop realistic perceptions of their son's aptitudes, abilities and interests in education and occupational planning. They will be supported by the Guidance Counsellors and all staff in their efforts to help their child with their personal, social and academic development.

6. Ethical Considerations and Accountability

This policy statement will be the basis on which a regular review and evaluation of the Counselling Service will be conducted between the Guidance Counsellors, the Principal and the Deputy Principal. A comprehensive review of the entire Counselling Service within the context of the Whole School Plan will provide an opportunity for the Guidance Counsellors to give a full report to the Senior Management team in the College, receive feedback on any gaps in the service and agree a budget for the following year. The Guidance Counselling Service is subject to all relevant legal requirements, to the provisions of the 1998 Education Act, Children's First Act 2017, Institute of Guidance Counsellors Code of Ethics 2009, to Department of Education and Science Directives, to the College's Religious and Educational Philosophy and the School Plan.

The Guidance Counsellors, like all other members of staff are entrusted with the care of their students in " loco parentis" and accepts the responsibilities of this position, keeping the students welfare to the forefront at all times. The Guidance Counsellors are constantly aware of their responsibility to the student, to the College, to his own profession, and to the implementation of this policy. The Guidance Counsellors will take part in professional peer supervision, which will provide support and feedback for his professional welfare.

7. Confidentiality

A professional relationship involving confidentiality is at the core of the Guidance Counselling Service in the College. The Guidance Counsellors will take reasonable care to ensure that consultations with students, parents and other professionals will take place in an appropriately private environment, especially in one-to-one consultations.

Student confidentiality must be respected unless there is clear and immediate danger to the student himself or to others. Hence, student confidentiality will be respected provided it is in the best interest of the student and that no other party will be endangered by it and all legal requirements are met. However, confidentiality will not be guaranteed in the following circumstances:

- when a student poses a danger to himself or others;
- when a student discloses an intention to commit a crime;
- when the counsellor suspects abuse or neglect;
- when a court orders a counsellor to make records available;
- when the students grants permission to share with another trusting individual.

All stakeholders including students and parents will be made aware of the nature of confidentiality and be given a clear understanding of what information will remain private and what information will be communicated to others. Written and Oral reports will contain only such data as are pertinent to the case, and every effort will be made to avoid undue invasion of the student's privacy.

8. 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 'Freedom of Information Act' and the 'Data Protection Act'.

"Counsellors maintain records necessary for rendering professional services to their clients and as required by laws, regulations, or agency or institutional procedures"

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.

9. The Student Support Team

The Student Support Team was set up in September 2009. The members of the team are; Principal, Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellors, School Completion Co-ordinator and Learning support coordinator.

The role of the Student Support Team is to complement the pastoral care programme carried out at so many different levels. The main focus is to co-ordinate our response to students who are deemed most at risk and those who are experiencing difficulties. The team links with all the welfare agencies to put strategies in place to deal with the concerns of the student. The support team liaises with the school psychologist in the implementation of interventions and strategies for individual students.

The team works to put strategies in place tailored to the students' needs. The team collaborates with a number of in-house support services and local referral agencies to support them in their work with the students. The core care team meets on a weekly basis.

10. Students transferring from another school.

A student who transfers to Moyle Park College during the academic year will be met by the relevant Year Head and Guidance counsellor to discuss subject choice and to ease the transition into Moyle Park College.

11. Referral Services

The Guidance Counsellor will refer where necessary to outside relevant bodies. Teachers, school management and parents may refer students to the Guidance Counsellor or SEN department using the school referral form (Appendix 1). Clear procedures of referral, which have been agreed between the Principal, Staff, Parents and the Guidance Counsellors taking into account the responsibilities of various teams and post holders within the school system will be followed.

Individual Education Plans for students with emotional and behavioural difficulties will be an integral dimension of the referral procedure and ongoing evaluation of the process will take place to ensure its effectiveness for all concerned.

The strategies that can be used to achieve this end include –

- Informing parents, staff and students as to the procedures for student referral both inside and outside the school;
- Use of “case conferences” in order to identify and help students at risk;
- Liaise with the Department of Education Psychological Service (NEPS) and Youth Support and Teen Counselling Services in the area.

12. Assessment Services

“Intelligence tests, as well as any other kind of tests, should be used not to label individuals but to help in understanding them.” 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 Counsellors, 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.

13. Appointments

13.1 Career Appointments

Career appointments are arranged with students and in consultation with timetabled teachers. It is the responsibility of the Guidance Counsellors to mark the students present during the appointment. Changing timetabled slots is allowed in exceptional circumstances and if adequate notification is given.

13.2 Information Appointments

These are arranged with the Guidance Counsellors outside of career class time. Students can request appointments via email or using the mail boxes placed outside of the Guidance Counsellors office.

13.3 Personal Counselling Appointments

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 that they may be experiencing.

The Student Support team members, Year Heads and Tutors play a central role in the delivery of the Counselling Programme and may refer a student to a Guidance Counsellors. Personal Counselling appointments may arise for a variety of reasons. A parent may ask for some intervention by the Guidance Counsellor and/or student may also approach a Guidance Counsellor directly and ask for an appointment.

14. Students dropping a subject / changing subject level

A student may be referred to a Guidance Counsellor in the event of a student wishing to drop/change subject level to ensure that they understand the implications, if any, of their decision. Equally, in the event of a change from higher to ordinary, Ordinary to Foundation or any other request for a change in level a student may be referred to the Guidance Counsellor for advice and Guidance. The Guidance Counsellor will consult with the relevant subject teacher.

15. Professional Development:

The guidance counsellors should keep abreast of on-going changes in the fields of training, education, work and child welfare. The Board of Management and school management should facilitate the attendance of the guidance counsellors at relevant events and at in-career professional training during the school year. Participation in these events should be related to the objectives of the school guidance programme. Attendance at non-school based events should be negotiated/agreed in advance

between the Board of Management, school management and the guidance counsellors.

16. Current Policies related to Guidance

- Code of Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying
- Child Protection
- Admission Policy
- Critical Incident Policy
- Substance Abuse
- Sexual Harassment
- Anti-Racism Policy
- Special Needs Policy
- Social Media Policy
- School Tour Policy

17. Critical Reflection and Evaluation

Critical reflection and evaluation is a very important part of the school Guidance Programme. It is important to measure and assess the strengths and weaknesses in the guidance service provided to secondary school students and to employ strategies for a whole school approach to guidance. Each year all Leaving Certificate students will be given the opportunity to evaluate the Guidance programme in the College. Appendix three outlines some of the strategies that can be used to implement a whole school approach to guidance. In addition, reflection and evaluation helps schools to identify the needs in the guidance field that are not currently being met and to develop a plan to meet these needs. Furthermore, it helps schools to ensure that the broader definition of guidance becomes embedded in the whole school programme, promotes greater guidance access for all students, and allows for a collaborative and team atmosphere to prevail.

This policy is subject to periodic review by the Board of Management

Appendix 1



Student Support Referral Form

Name of Student: _____ Form Class: _____

Form Tutor: _____ Year Head: _____

Outline concern: Pastoral ☐ Learning ☐

Details

Outline any actions taken to date:

| Areas for concern | Indicate | 1 poor-----5 good |
|------------------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Organisational Skills | | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Homework | | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Ability to understand instructions | | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Presentation of written work | | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Recall | | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Social interaction with peers | | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Have you made contact with parent/guardian? Yes / No

Signed: _____ Date: _____

