

Guidance & Counselling **Policy**



St. Michael's College

Guidance Counselling Policy

St. Michael's College

1. General

Mission statement

St. Michael's College is a Christian community of students, staff, parents and management with a strong tradition of family loyalty. The characteristics of this school community are respect, tolerance, care, compassion and justice. The College believes in a positive approach to discipline. Students are guided and encouraged to accept responsibility for their own behaviour.

St. Michael's College values academic excellence and offers a comprehensive curriculum which best meets the needs of the students within the context of the available resources. Our aim is to enable the release of the God given talents and potential within each student. We aim to develop self confidence and a healthy self image, therefore ensuring that skills and competencies necessary for life are promoted and actively encouraged, as are sports, culture and leisure time activities.

This plan is not a rigid template and reflects the uniqueness of St. Michael's College in its own particular context and circumstances. This Guidance plan refers to the "subject" of guidance as it is delivered to the students. It is aware of their needs and mindful of the available resources.

The school Guidance plan is a structured document that describes the schools guidance programme and specifies how the guidance needs of students are to be addressed. This plan forms part of the Whole School Guidance Plan.

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 career choices..."

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

Implications

The Act refers to access (to school resources, physical and personnel...) and appropriate guidance (i.e. whole school response to meeting the guidance needs of all its students). Guidance is a core requirement of the school's overall programme: this requires that it is an integral part of the school plan. The mission statement and the school ethos are reflected in the guidance plan.

What is guidance in schools

Guidance counselling and guidance and counselling refers to the range of learning experiences provided in a developmental sequence, designed to assist students to make choices about their lives. These choices may be categorised into three distinct but interlinked areas:

- Personal and social.
- Educational.
- Career.

Guidance activities that assist students to make informed choices include:

- Personal counselling.
- Assessment using psychometric instruments and inventories
- Career information (classroom, personal vocational guidance interviews, attendance at career events...)
- Use of information technology eg. www.cao.ie, www.qualifax.ie www.careersportal.ie.
- Well-being, Personal and Social development programmes.

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 a moment of personal crisis. Counselling may include personal counselling, educational counselling, career counselling or a combination of some or all of these.

Aims

- Provide a framework for the delivery of the school's guidance programme
- Ensure a structured response to student's personal, social, educational and career guidance needs.
- The plan needs to be inclusive providing for the junior, senior, minority, special educational needs etc., of all students.
- The plan will include all guidance activities: classroom sessions, vocational guidance interviews, attendance at career exhibitions, opendays etc., meeting with management, support agencies etc., personal counselling etc.

Objectives

- Develop awareness of their talents, interests and abilities.
- Identify and explore opportunities, both personally and educationally.
- To aid and encourage ambition, independence and responsibility for themselves.
- Make informed choice about their careers and follow through on these choices.

Guidance Counsellor/Subject co-ordinator

Ms. Bernie Slattery.

Role of Subject Coordinator

The deliver of a comprehensive guidance programme is the responsibility of the guidance counsellor but a whole school approach is essential to realise this objective. A holistic approach is essential to guidance provision to ensure all students have "access to appropriate guidance" (9(c) Education Act. 1998) Guidance planning is to be considered a process, to evolve over time, reflecting the needs of all students, available resources and contextual factors.

Time Allocation, option structures and timetabling

The Department of Education and Science (DES) has allocated 8 hours for guidance activities in St Michael's College.

2. Guidance Curriculum

The guidance curriculum may be divided into two components:

- Formal.
- Informal.

Formal Guidance

The formal guidance curriculum is delivered using two form of intervention employing a number of methodologies:

Individual contact of a personal nature and careers/vocational guidance.

Classroom guidance is delivered as required throughout the year.

Informal guidance

The informal guidance programme consists of working with staff and management to promote and enhance the development of a whole school policy in relation to the delivery of The Guidance Plan. Meetings with The Care Team, which includes the special needs and S.P.H.E. coordinators, and Parents/Guardians form an integral part of informal guidance as do the Student Support Team (SST) meetings on a weekly basis. This group is made up of the Principal, Deputy Principal, Guidance counsellor and Year Heads.

	9am	10am		11.10am	12.10pm	1.10pm	1:40pm	2.40pm
Mon			B R E A K			L U N C H		
Tues		Career		Class	Career		Career	Career
Wed		Career		Career	Class			
Thur		Class		Career	SST meeting		Class	Career
Fri								

Grouping of Students

Students participate in the guidance programme in their year group or in their smaller class groups. Students in St. Michael's in all years apart from 1st year are steamed into two/three groups.

Class Organisation/ Effective Teaching Methodologies

Year/Group	Teaching Methodologies
1 st	One class period of guidance (wellness) with both 1A, 1B, 1C
2 nd	No Class Contact. Group work with selected students*.
3 rd	1 class period per week 3 rd years.
5 th L.Certs.	1 class period. Reach programme
6 th L.Certs.	1class period per week with 6 th years

*Additional class/year group intervention may be arranged as required.

Range and Variety of Resources

- Personnel
- Materials
- Facilities
- External

Personnel

Guidance Counsellor, Management, Year Heads, Tutors, Class Teachers, Resource Teachers, School Completion Programme Coordinator, Further Education Teachers, Special Needs Assistants, School Administration staff.

Materials

Careers Library in Guidance Counsellors office contains information on 3rd Level colleges in Ireland, UK and Europe.

Computer rooms and internet which offers all information needed when researching a career e.g. www.qualifax.ie, www.careersportal.ie, www.cao.ie, and www.ucas.co.uk www.eunicas.ie

Facilities

Guidance office with phone, computer, printer, internet, careers' library, two computer rooms, a laptop and notice boards

External

Open days, career exhibitions, University Summer Programmes, Career information sessions.....

Mock Interviews, Parents and Guest speakers (Army, Garda, etc.,)

Internal

Parent's information nights:

- First year parents nights—(1) Open night. All prospective students visit the school, look around and talks from Principal, Deputy, Guidance Counsellor and Year Head. (2) Welcome, Books, Compass, Question and Answer session, etc. (3) Distribution of books, the Well-Being programme, Uniform, detail on subjects, etc
- Parents subject choice nights—1st year and 3rd years
- C.A.O. information night for parents, as well as information on HEAR, DARE and SUSI.

3. Provision for Health and Safety Requirements

This section of the plan may be subdivided:

- Administration
- Policies

Administration

To ensure the safe and effective delivery of a guidance programme an appointments system for personal counselling/careers/Vocational guidance interviews operates. Appointments or referrals for appointments can be made at any time during the Guidance Counsellor's available time. Appointments are made in consultation with the student to reduce class disruption. The class teacher has the right to refuse a student to leave for an appointment. If a teacher refuses the appointment is rescheduled.

Staff and teachers are informed of classes attending Career Exhibitions/Open Days by written notice on the weekly planner for events which is distributed to all staff.

Policies

Health and Safety Policy for School.
Child Protection Policy
Special Needs Policy
Homework Policy
Anti-Bullying Policy
Critical Incident Policy

4. Programmes and Levels

Curricular content/Guidance Syllabus 1st –6th year

1st Years

Organisational

- Entrance assessment ---Cognitive Abilities Test 4 (C.A.T.4)
- Primary school visits collect information, and psychological reports if available.
- Application to S.E.N.O. for resource hours for students with psychological reports.

- Individual interview with each student around 'How they are settling in'
- Counselling to certain students and referrals to outside agencies e.g. Jigsaw.
- Mentoring programme with 5th years
- The Academic Council track student's academic progress using their CAT 4 results as well as other tests as appropriate.

2nd Years

Organisational

- No formal contact on timetable.
- Individual counselling to certain students and referrals to outside agencies.
- Academic Council (as above)

3rd Years

Organisational

- 1 class contact on timetable.
- Individual counselling to certain students and referrals
- Exam technique and study skills
- Academic Council (as above)
- Reasonable accommodations applications for state exams in conjunction with the SEN co-ordinator.
- Individual meetings to ascertain suitability for transition year/5th year
- Subject choice for 5th year

External

- C.T.Y.I. Summer Schools

5th Years

Syllabus

- L.C.V.P. requirements, student's needs.

Organisational

- Career talks and Career Expos
- Study Skills
- Reasonable accommodation applications
- Individual counselling to certain students and Referrals
- Mock Interviews
- Psychometric tests, Cognitive Abilities Tests (CAT 4)
- Academic Council

External

- Summer Schools (C.T.Y.I.)

6th Years

Syllabus

- Formal class once a week
- Aptitude, Interest and personality tests.
- Career options
- Qualifax, CAO, and CareersPortal websites.
- CAO and or UCAS Applications on line.
- PLC Applications incl FETCH
- Exam techniques and Study skills
- College funding –SUSI Grants

Organisational

- Individual Career interview (at least one)
- College Talks
- Career Talks
- Open Day visits
- Access Programmes (H.E.A.R. & D.A.R.E.)
- Mock Interviews
- Reasonable accommodation applications in conjunction with the SEN co-ordinator.
- Individual counselling to certain students and Referrals

External

- Career Exhibition Day in Tralee/Killarney (Organised by Kerry branch of I.G.C.)

5. Planning for a Culturally Diverse Society

We, as a school community, endeavour to:

- Create an atmosphere that respects and celebrates cultural diversity
- Encourage full participation by all students
- Support students whose first language is not English
- Encourage all students to pursue all levels in state examinations

6. Provision for students with special needs

Work is differentiated to match student's needs and to help the student with special needs to find a path through the various syllabi. Where students in mixed ability classes have special needs e.g. Dyslexia, Autism Spectrum Disorder and they are

supported to access course material using a variety of different resources. The LINK team is in operation in the school. We endeavour to support the student by providing learning support wherever and whenever possible within the constraints of the timetable and the resource hours available.

Some of the methods and approaches used are:

- Identification of students (C.A.T.'s, Standardised Spelling Tests, Wiat III tests)
- Careful choice of appropriate texts, particularly English
- Use of audio-visual material
- Active methodology, using worksheets, puzzles, word searches.
- Some students receive extra tuition, in small groups, with a specified resource teacher. We have 3 Special Needs Assistants (Two of whom works specifically with students who is on the ASD Spectrum). We have a Special Education Needs Team who work with our SEN Co-ordinator.
- Those students who have a language exemption will do extra tuition during language class.

7. Record-Keeping Procedures

Two types of records

1. Detailed personal records of all personal counselling and careers/vocational guidance interviews.
2. Summary reference records of personal counselling sessions.
 - Student records are kept for a minimum of 7 years, in a locked filing cabinet.
 - The detailed records of personal counselling sessions will contain some of the actual words and phrases used by the client.
 - To ensure accuracy the guidance counsellor writes up notes as soon as possible after the session using only initials and code words.
 - Keep notes brief as possible, key words and phrases are used.

All counselling reports, notes and psychological reports are stored safely in the locked filing cabinet, to which only the Guidance Counsellor has the key.

8. Reporting Procedures

In both personal counselling and careers/vocational guidance interviews 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 a danger to themselves and/or others, or if they know of somebody else in danger (this is a legal requirement). The student is informed of the limits of confidentiality at the beginning of the session. If it is felt that it is best to inform parent/guardian/teacher of a particular difficulty, this is only done with the knowledge and hopefully with the agreement the student.

Within the school mandatory reporting is to the Designated Liaison Person. In the case of St. Michael's College, this is the principal, Mr. John Mulvihill.

(9) In-Career Development

To maintain qualified membership of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors a chartered member must complete 10 hours of in-service training annually (IGC Construction and Code of Ethics 2004)

In-career development is essential to the work of the guidance counsellor. Regular attendance at local IGC meetings and counselling supervision is facilitated by St.Michael's College and by good timetabling by the school.

The Kerry branch of the IGC provide a range of workshops and presentations relevant to our work throughout the year. Additional in-service is organised at local or national level and is open to all registered members of the IGC. The DES supports the provision of in-service for IGC members through funding. The IGC has numerous links with organisations e.g. Institute of Suicidology, IBEC, SOLAS, IAPC...all offering in-career development. Attendance at open days, career seminars etc. all constitute in-career development.

In the Kerry branch we have several in service courses every year e.g. La Touche, Body Why's, Reach, etc.

As a practising Guidance Counsellor I am very much involved in the Kerry branch. I have organised the Careers Exhibition for the past number of years, and I was very involved in the organisation of the annual Guidance Counsellors Conference held in Kerry in 2007. I was the chairperson of the Kerry branch of the I.G.C. up to recently (This was my 3rd time in this post)

10. Testing

1. Assessment tests for incoming 1st year students. Currently the tests used are:

- CAT 4 level E (Verbal, Numerical and Perceptual Intelligence)
- Group Reading Test II
- Dictation of five sentences
- Maths tests

The CAT test takes about two and a half hours and is scheduled for April/May each year. Although, because of Covid restrictions, these tests were administered in September of 2020 and 2021.

The CAT 4 results are used for assessing if any special interventions are necessary. We are going to use them from this year on to track student's results. For Example if Student A achieves a maximum score of 9 in his verbal assessment, then we would expect him to achieve A's in his English tests. However, if he achieves 6 in his numerical tests then we would expect him to get C's and B's in his Maths exams. Consequently, on examination of the student's results we can issue a "Gold Card" for lower grades if the student is reaching his potential, therefore building their self-esteem and confidence.

2. 5th years can be tested using some of the following:

- Careers Portal Interest test.
- Qualifax Interest Tests.

- CAT 4, Level H (Cognitive Abilities Test)

These tests are selected by taking into account the needs of the class involved. The above tests can also be taken individually by appointment.

11. Protocol for Meetings

Meeting with students are all by appointment. The class teacher has the right to refuse a student permission to leave for an appointment. If a teacher refuses the appointment is rescheduled. Students are signed out by the subject teacher at the time of the appointment using an appointment card system. Teachers may also refer the students to the guidance counsellor. The guidance Counsellor is briefed by the teacher through the SST meetings and a plan of action is negotiated.

Parents/Guardians make appointments with the Guidance Counsellor by telephoning the school. Appointments are conducted during the school day. All parties are requested to inform each other of if a cancellation is necessary. On occasion the Guidance Counsellor may request another staff member e.g. Vice Principal, Principal, SEN co-ordinator or Year Head to be present at the meeting. The student may be invited in for whole or part of the meeting with approval of parent/guardian. This gives the student responsibility, ownership and inclusion in the meetings outcome. Notes are kept all meeting by the guidance counsellor.

12. Links with Staff/Outside Agencies

The following demonstrates the whole school dimension of Guidance and the collaboration between the whole school community and the Guidance Counsellor

- Management (Principal/Deputy Principal)
- Year heads
- Class teachers
- Transition Year Coordinator (if we're running a Transition Year programme)
- Caretaker/Care taking staff
- Student Council
- Parents and Parents council
- Care Team/SSTeam
- LINK (School Completion)

Outside Agencies

- Kerry Adolescent Counselling Service
- Social Workers
- Doctors
- Employers
- Colleges/Admission Officers and Access Officers
- ETB/Solas
- Defence Forces, Gardai
- Department of Education (RACE)

- Business and School Partnership
- K.D.Y.S. Partnership
- C.A.O., U.C.A.S. and Eunicas (studying in Europe)

Bibliography/Research

References

The Education Act, 1998 www.oireachtas.ie

Planning the whole school Guidance Programme. National Centre for Guidance in Education www.ncge.ie

Planning the school Guidance Plan, School Development Planning Initiative (SDPI), 2004 www.sdpi.ie

Guidelines for Second Level Schools on the implications of Section (c) of the Education Act 2005. www.education.ie

Circular letter No PPT 12/05: Guidance Provision in second –Level Schools. Institute of Guidance Counsellors-Constitution and Code of Ethics 2004.

Websites

Central Applications Office (CAO) www.cao.ie

Department of Education and Science www.education.ie

SOLAS www.solas.ie

Institute of Guidance Counsellors www.igc.ie

National Centre for Guidance in Education www.ncge.ie

Qualifax www.qualifax.ie

Careers Portal www.careersportal.ie

National Qualifications Authority of Ireland www.nqai.ie

National Educational Psychological Service www.neps.ie

St Michael's College Guidance Counselling Service
Appointment Slip

<u>Guidance Appointment</u>
Name:
Date:
Time:
Teacher:

<u>Guidance Appointment</u>
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<u>Guidance Appointment</u>
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Date:
Time:
Teacher:

St Michael's College Guidance Counselling Service
Careers Appointment Form

Section A to be filled out by student

Personal Information

Name: _____ Male _____ Female _____

Year: _____ Age _____

Address _____

Home Tel _____

Mobile _____

Junior Results

Subject	Level	Result
Maths		
English		
CSPE		
Art		

Work Experience

Hobbies and Interests

Achievements

Leaving Cert Subjects and Results of most recent exam

Subject	Level	Grade	Points
Maths			
Irish			
English			
French			
Biology			
Calculate your Total Points			

Points Higher: H1=100, H2=88, H3=77. H4= 66, H5=56, H6=46, H7=37points.
 Points Ordinary: O1=56, O2=46, O3=37, O4=28, O5=20, O6=12points

List your career options

Any questions

Section B- To be filled out by guidance Counsellor

Date _____

Reason for visit _____

Assessments e.g. Careers portal, Qualifax, etc. Yes ____ No ____

Notes:-