

Sligo Grammar School



GUIDANCE PLAN

Mission Statement

Sligo Grammar School aims to promote excellence in an inclusive and supportive Community that reflects Christian values, where each member is enabled to achieve his/her full potential in life and in learning.

The Guidance Plan draws its inspiration from and is guided by the Mission Statement. It endeavours to provide a range of learning experiences designed to assist students to make choices about their lives and to make transitions in accordance with those choices. These choices may be categorised into three separate but interlinked areas:

- Personal & Social
- Educational
- Career

It aspires to facilitate the maturation process of the students and to build their self-esteem and self-worth in a way that will encourage them to embrace the opportunities that their futures will present. It does this in partnership with the staff, the students, the parents and guardians as well as members of the local community, work providers and statutory bodies. The Guidance Programme is supported by the entire staff and they are vigilant and alert to the needs of students they encounter and who are well positioned to provide information and assistance to those students who require it.

Rationale

The Education Act 1998 Section 9 (c) requires schools to ‘...ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices...’ The provision of guidance is a statutory requirement of schools under this act.

The Aims of the Guidance Programme

- Help students explore their thoughts and feelings and the choices open to them in the various aspects of their lives.
- Give care and support to students learning to cope with specific difficulties and those learning to cope with the many aspects of growing up.
- Provide various types of psychometric tests and interest inventories to assist students to obtain a better self-understanding.
- Provide factual information on education and training opportunities, occupation and labour market trends and to assist students in the transition to further and higher education, training and employment (UCAS, Eunicas, CAO, Fullbright & USA applications, SOLAS, MSLETB).
- Provide individual students with advice and directions in the personal, social, education and career areas.
- Assist students in choosing their subjects and to develop study skills and exam techniques
- Co-operate with the SPHE teachers in the delivery of knowledge and skills relating to the personal and social development, self-awareness, decision making and planning of students.
- Refer students if necessary, to outside services such as GP’s and NEPS.

- Facilitate the referral of individual students to the Guidance Counsellor by teachers, Board of Management, school management, and parents while respecting the voluntary participation of the referred student.
- Provide an Induction Programme for incoming first year pupils and to assist their transition from primary to secondary school.
- Facilitate students to experience the world of work in a meaningful and structured way in conjunction with parents, relevant programme coordinators and work providers.
- Track the progression of past pupils so that current pupils can benefit from their knowledge and experience of further and higher education, training and employment.
- Be available by appointment to parents who wish to discuss issues arising for individual pupils.
- Establish links with employers, relevant agencies and institutions to enhance the provision of guidance for the pupils.

Guidance Counsellor

Ms. Cecilia McGuinness

Number of Guidance Hours

Total number of students in school: 450 (201-2020)

Total number of hours: 20.40 (weekly)

Allocation of time by Guidance Counsellor

Year Group	Class Allocation
1 st Year	Induction Programme Individual appointment with school chaplain
2 nd Year	Individual appointment with school chaplain
3 rd Year	Study Skills Seminar Individual appointment with school chaplain
Transition Year	1 class per week per week per class group 1 individual appointment regarding subject choice with GC
5 th Year	1 class per week per class group 1 individual appointment with GC
6 th Year	1 class per week per class group Numerous individual appointments with GC

Consultation Process for development of Guidance Plan

This process took place in a series of steps.

1. Formation of Guidance Planning Group which consisted of Principal, Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellor, Chaplain, Year Heads, Rep from Special Needs Department.
2. Audit of the guidance provision available for each year in the school using the template provided by the SDPI.
3. The results of this audit were circulated to all staff member and they were invited to identify gaps in the provision for each year group.
4. The audit was also provided to a meeting of the Parents' Association where the Guidance Counsellor attended the meeting to explain the audit and to listen to the responses from the parents.
5. A draft plan was drawn up taking into account the recommendation of staff and parents.
6. This draft was circulated for the BOM to allow the representatives of the Trustees to make suggestions and recommendations.
7. The Guidance Plan was drawn up taking account of all the suggestions and recommendations and available resources.
8. This plan undergoes regular evaluation with specific aspects being evaluated by the target groups: eg. Leaving Certificate students evaluate the guidance provision for senior cycle at the end of their fifth year.

Guidance Curriculum

The Guidance curriculum is divided into two components:

1. Formal Guidance
2. Informal Guidance

Formal Guidance

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

1. Individual contact of a personal counselling nature and careers/vocational guidance.
2. Classroom guidance delivered in regular weekly classes.

Informal Guidance

The Informal Guidance programme consists of liaising with other teaching staff, school management, parents and local service providers to promote cross curricular links and to enhance the development of a whole school policy in relation to the delivery of The Guidance Plan. Meeting with parents/guardians form an integral part of informal guidance as do career events and information nights.

Grouping of students

Students participate in the Guidance programme within their class group. Class groupings are organised on a streamed basis in Junior Cycle. In Senior Cycle, they are streamed but they are also banded which allows students to access their core subjects at an appropriate level.

Range and Variety of Resources

The guidance teacher has a range of resources available to her. These include:

- Office with PC and telephone
- Access to the computer room

Provision of Health and Safety Requirements

This section of the plan may be subdivided

- Administration
- Policies

Administration

To ensure the safe and effective delivery of guidance programmes an Appointments System for Personal counselling/Careers/Vocational Guidance – Interviews operate. Appointments are made with the Guidance Counsellor and the student is given an appointment slip indicating the time and date of the appointment. They must show this to the teacher whose class they are leaving. The class teacher has the right to refuse a student to leave for an appointment due to a test or to essential work being done in that class. If a teacher refuses, the appointment is then rescheduled. The onus is placed on the student to swop their allocated time with another student for a more appropriate time and date.

Attendance sheets are used for career talks/presentation or external trips. The Guidance Counsellor will take names for talks etc. and this list is photocopied and placed on the notice board in the staff room. The original copy is used to take a roll call at the beginning of the presentation by the Guidance Counsellor.

Policies related to School Guidance

- Counselling Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Policy for Leaving Certificate subject choices
- Policy for changing a subject in 5th year
- Attendance at Open Days/Career Events
- Critical Incident Policy

These policies are contained in the appendix.

1st Year Guidance Plan

The Guidance Plan for first year pupils is developed and delivered in co-operation with the RSE, SPHE, school chaplain and individual class teachers. Where appropriate, the programme is also supported by invited speakers and the proactive engagement of parents. The topics covered in the Personal and Social Education areas are: Transition from primary to secondary school, making new friends, bullying, substance misuse and healthy eating. In the area of Education Guidance, the identification of the educational needs of first year students is dealt with while in the Career Guidance area, the topics covered are: subject choice and subject skills.

These topics have been identified by the Guidance Planning Group and the general staff as the most important topics in the Guidance Plan for first year students. The following page presents a details overview of how each topic is explored and delivered in various setting and by various individuals.

Number of weekly timetable classes: Guidance: 0

SPHE: 1

CSPE: 1

1st Year Guidance Plan

Personal and Social Education

Transition from primary to secondary school;

- Visit to primary schools
- School Prospectus
- Transition Day in May
- Orientation Programme
- Mentoring Programme
- Individual meetings for all first years
- Individual form teacher

Making New Friends

- Transition Day in May
- Orientation Programme (September)
- Mentoring Programme
- SPHE Programme
- Individual meetings for all 1st years
- Information Night for parents

Bullying

- Transition Day
- Orientation Programme (September)
- Mentoring Programme
- RE Programme Individual class teachers
- Individual meetings will all 1st years

Substance Misuse

- SPHE Programme
- Invited Speakers

Healthy Eating

- SPHE Programme
- Invited Speakers

Educational Guidance

Identification of educational needs

- Induction Day
- Specific diagnostic tests
- Special needs department
- Information from primary schools

Careers Education

Study Skills

- Study skills programme
- Individual class teachers
- Information night for parents

Subject Choice

- Special Needs Department
- Class Presentations
- Information Pack
- Information Night for parents

Relationships and Sexuality

- SPHE Programme
- CSPE Programme
- RE Programme

Health and Safety

- SPHE Programme
- Invited Speakers

Stress and Exam Pressure

- SPHE Programme

Goal Setting

- SPHE Programme Guidance

Study Skills

- Study Skills Programme
- SPHE Programme

4th Year Guidance Plan

Transition Year

The Guidance Plan for Transition Year pupils is developed and delivered in co-operation with the T.Y. Co-ordinator and the T.Y. team. Where appropriate, the programme is also supported by invited speakers and parents. The topics covered in the Personal and Social Education areas are: decision making skills, consequences, team work, personal responsibility and contemporary issues. In Educational Guidance the topics covered are: types of colleges, how to find information, interview techniques, personal presentation, skills audit, job search, CV and cover letters and work experience. In the Career Guidance area, the areas covered are: Goal setting, self-motivation dealing with change and dealing with crises.

The students a number of weeks of work experience placements.

Number of weekly timetabled classes: Guidance: 1

Personal and Social Education

Decision Making Skills	Role playing
Consequences	Project Work
Personal Responsibility	
Moral Dilemmas	
Team Work Community	
Budget Management	

Educational Guidance

Qualifications	Class Presentations
Progression Routes	
How to find Information	
CV & Cover Letters	Interviews Class in Computer Room
Interviews	Class Preparation & Handbook
Work Experience	Class Presentation and Handbook
Transferable Skills	
World of Work	

Careers Education

DAT Testing and Feedback

- Group testing
- Written test result
- Individual meetings for each student

Senior Cycle Information

- Class Presentations
- Information Booklet
- Information Night for parents
- Individual appointments
- Appointments for parents
- Programme co-ordinators

Subject Choice

- Class Presentations
- Information Booklet
- Information Night for parents
- Individual appointments
- Appointments for parents

Types of College

- Class Presentation
- Reach Workbook

World of Work

- Class Presentation
- Reach Workbook

Transition Year Programme

Approximate duration of Module: 1 Class per week for duration of the school year.

Aims The programme aims to introduce students to the forces at work in the adult world, teach them the fundamentals of career planning and help them develop the necessary skills to function successfully in the world of work.

Objectives

- Students will explore the concept of career in the holistic sense which includes education, work, family, leisure and community.
- They will assume life/ work roles in order to explore and experience issues and aspects of adult life and the world of work.
- By learning about themselves within these roles they will gain a real understanding of how important job satisfaction is for adults and discover it is an outcome they can achieve by making the choices that are right for them.
- While role playing occupations, students will earn and spend money, participate in community life, make decisions that affect their characters' lives for better or worse, battle with or celebrate chance occurrences and learn that every decision is a career decision.
- In their communities, students will make decisions on social issues that affect the future of their communities and themselves.

Teaching and Learning Strategies

- Teacher Input
- Group Work
- Experiential Learning
- Role play
- Individual Assignments

Content List

- Preparing for Work
- World at Work
- Lifestyle
- Moral Dilemmas
- Community
- Handling Change
- Transferable Skills
- Adults in World of Work

Assessment

- Assignments- individual and group
- Self-Assessment Exercises to gain insight into their interests, skills and learning styles.

Resources

- Reach Workbook
- Guest Speakers
- Interviewers
- Visits to industry/business

Transition Year Links to Industry Programme

Transition Year students complete 2 weeks of work experience. They also visit a number of Dublin based universities and colleges. These trips have been organised in conjunction with the Schools liaison officers in these colleges. Every 2 years students attend the North West Careers Fest which is a day where they attend talks by professionals from a range of sectors. It is an event organised by local Guidance Counsellors and all relevant post second level training bodies and educational institutions are represented. The event is held at ITSligo. TY students also attend annual taster days in the local IT.

5th Year Guidance Plan

The Guidance Plan for fifth year pupils is developed and delivered in co-operation with the RSE, SPHE and individual class teachers. Where appropriate, the programme is also supported by invited speakers and the proactive engagement of parents. The topics covered in the Personal and Social Education areas are: substance misuse, personality types and personality development, decision making in relation to personal morality. In Educational Guidance the topics covered are: Qualifications, type of colleges, the points system, study methods and timetable, how to find information in a prospectus and the internet, interview techniques, CV and cover letters, work experience, UCAS and apprenticeships. In the Career Guidance area, the areas covered are: Subject Choice, Goal setting, motivation and study skills, career interest tests and careers project.

These topics have been identified by the Guidance Planning Group and the general staff as the most important topics in the Guidance Plan for fourth year students. The following page presents a detailed overview of how each topic is explored and delivered in various settings and by various individuals.

Number of weekly timetabled classes:	Guidance:	1
	RE	1

5th Year Guidance Plan

Personal and Social Education

Substance misuse	RE class
Personality: types and development	RE class
Decision making in personal morality	RE class

Educational Guidance

These topics are covered in the regular careers class and are occasionally supported by invited speakers and the annual **Mock Interview Evening**. Local professionals give their time to interview students in their preferred career area of interest.

Qualifications (NFQ)	Class Presentation
Progression Routes	Class Presentation
Type of College	Class Presentation
Study Methods and Study Timetable	Class Presentation

UCAS	Class Presentation
The Points System	Class Presentations
	Information Booklet
College and course entry requirement	Class Presentations
	Information Booklet
Information on FAS apprenticeships	Class Presentations
	Information Booklet

Careers Education

Study Skills

- Study Skills Programme

Goal Setting and motivation

- Class presentations
- Guidance Counsellor 1 to 1
- Invited speakers

Career Interest Tests

- Administered in Class

Career Project

- Individual career area research

College and course entry requirements

- Class Presentations

6th Year Guidance Plan

The Guidance Plan for sixth year pupils is developed and delivered in co-operation with RSE, SPHE and individual class teachers. Where appropriate, the programme is also supported by invited speakers and the proactive engagement of parents. The topics covered in the Personal and Social Education areas are: exploration of sexuality, family planning, marriage and divorce, sexually transmitted diseases and aids, substance misuse. In Educational Guidance the topics covered are: National Framework of Qualifications, Ladder of Progression, the points system, finance and grants, transition to college, accommodation and budgeting. In the Career Guidance area, the areas covered are: Goal setting, motivation and study skills, UCAS and CAO applications, PLC courses, and apprenticeships

These topics have been identified by the Guidance Planning Group and the general staff as the most important topics in the Guidance Plan for sixth year students. The following page presents a detailed overview of how each topic is explored and delivered in various settings and by various individuals.

Careers Events

For the past number of years, a 'Careers' Night' has been held for the parents and guardians of all traditional Leaving certificate students. This night is conducted by the Guidance Counsellor and the following topics were covered in a power point presentation: CAO Application process, Grants, HEAR, and finance in general, PLC courses, apprenticeships and the UCAS system.

Throughout their final year, students are also provided with information on study skills, life skills and the transition from second to third level from invited speakers as well as various presentations from IT's and universities in this region.

Policy Documents

Counselling Policy

As Guidance Counsellor, I work with students, individually and in groups concerning educational, vocational and personal/social development.

I respect the dignity, integrity and welfare of all students and I support students' control over their own lives, and their ability to make decisions and engage in personal change in the light of their own beliefs and values.

My work involves a special relationship of trust and confidence and I am responsible for maintaining trust by setting and monitoring appropriate boundaries in the relationship.

The relationship with the student is my foremost concern but it does not exist in a social vacuum. For this reason, I have regard for the social context of our work, which includes colleagues, the Law and the wider community.

I am also mindful that my relationship with students may involve conflicts of interest because of dual roles (e.g. responsibility to student vs. responsibility to school). In such situations we clarify to all concerned the nature of our concerns.

I attend supervision provided by the DES as an integral part of my work

I maintain and develop my professional competence by attending regular in-service.

I recognise the limits of my training and experience and take care not to exceed them. Where I do not feel competent, I make appropriate referral to others within or outside the profession.

I ensure that my behaviour does not exploit students emotionally, sexually, financially or in any other way.

Students usually attend for six counselling periods but this may vary depending on the needs of the students and the resources available.

Confidentiality

A professional relationship involving confidentiality is at the core of guidance counselling. I take all reasonable steps to ensure that consultation with students takes place in an appropriately private environment mindful of protocols for the protection of the counsellor. I take all reasonable steps to preserve the confidentiality of information about students obtained in the course of our work. I reveal such information only with the client's consent, but with certain exceptions, which include: where concealment would result in danger to the client or others; when required by the Law or designated guidelines; or for purposes of professional consultation or supervision. If I am in any doubt about the legal requirements, I check with the Principal or Social Services without breaching confidentiality.

I inform students about legal limits on confidentiality during the class introduction to the school counselling services and at the start of their first session.

I retain records of counselling in a secure location which can only be accessed' by the guidance counsellor.

Consent

Through their acceptance and signing of the code of discipline, parents and guardians as well as students consent to counselling support where a student is experiencing difficulties. I try to ensure that students are comfortable with the counselling process

To ensure the safe and effective delivery of a guidance and counselling programme an Appointments System for Personal counselling/Careers/Vocational Guidance Interviews operate. Appointments may be made with the guidance counsellor. Careers and vocational guidance appointments are made with the teacher timetabled for careers with that class. Appointments are generally made at the end of a careers class and are made in consultation with the student to reduce disruption. The class teacher has the right to refuse a student to leave for an appointment as they are required to "sign out" a student to attend the Guidance Counsellor. If a teacher refuses, the appointment is then rescheduled.

Students sign up in advance for talks and career presentations. This is organised by the career teacher to ensure that only students who have expressed an interest in a career area would be allowed to attend. This is done to ensure the maximum benefit for students while ensuring the minimum disruption for classes. This sheet is then photocopied and posted on the Staff Room Notice Board. The original copy is used to take a roll-call at the beginning of the presentation by the Guidance Counsellor.

Policies

- Child Protection Policy and Safeguarding Assessment
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- LC Subject Choices and Change of Level or subject
- Critical Incident Management Plan