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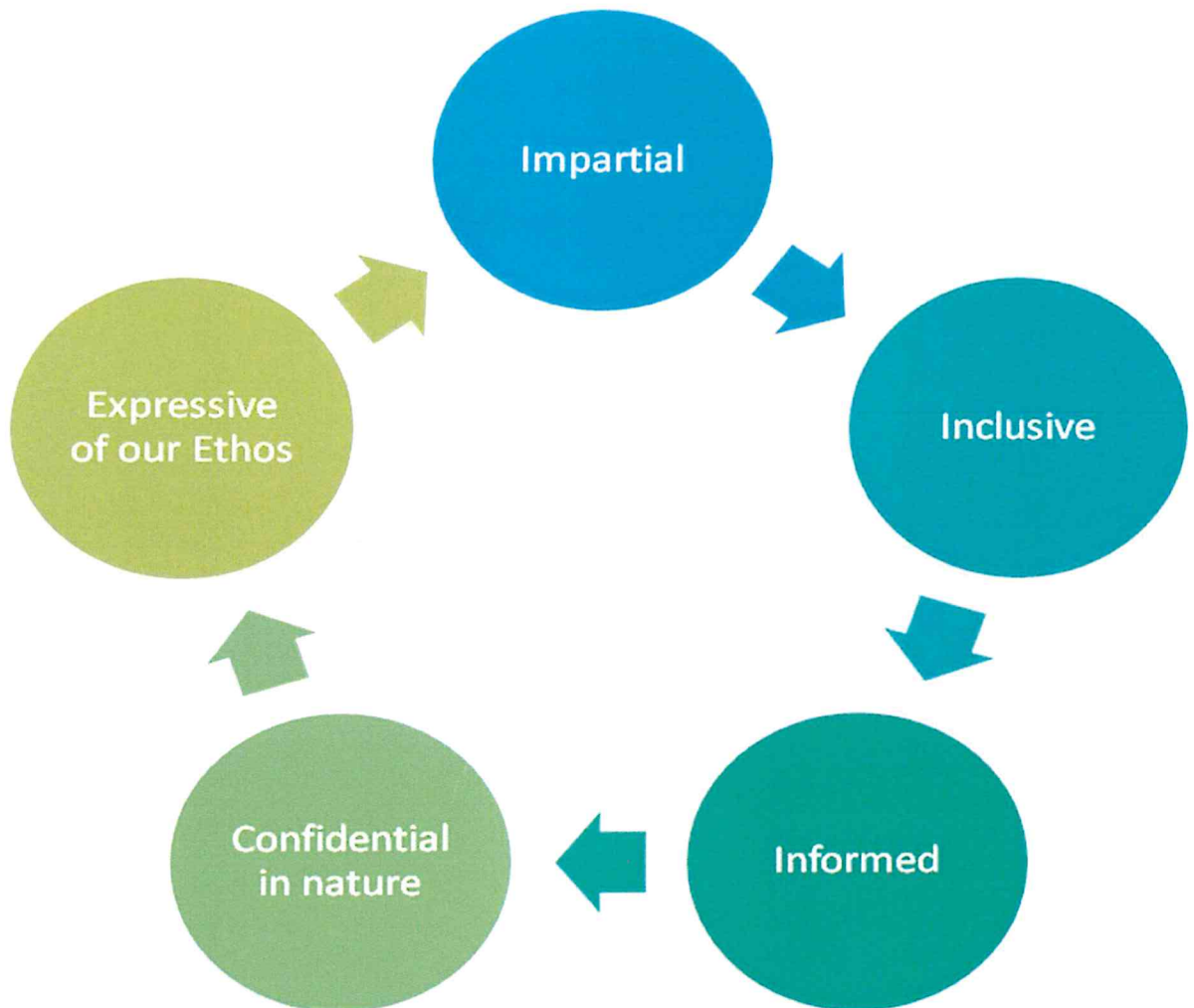
Ardcoil Rath Iomgháin, Rathangan, Co Kildare



Whole School Guidance Plan 2024/2025



The Whole School Guidance Plan endeavours to make guidance:





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Glossary:

AFL: Assessment of Learning

BOM: Board of Management

CAMHS: Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

CAT4: Cognitive Ability Test 4

CAO: Central applications Office

CAW: College Awareness Week

CEIST: Catholic Education An Irish Schools' Trust

CMS: Career Management Skills

CSPE: Civic Social and Political Education

DARE: Disability access Route to Education

DES: Department of Education and Skills

ESL: Early School Leavers

EUNICAS: European Universities Central application Support Service

FET: Further Education and Training

FETAC: Further Education and Training Awards Council

GDPR: General Data Protection Regulation

HE: Higher Education

HEAR: Higher Education Access Route

HEI: Higher Education Institution

HSE: Health Service Executive

ICT: Information and Communication Technology

IGC: Institute of Guidance Counsellors

JCT: Junior Cycle for Teachers

LCE: Leaving Certificate Established

LCVP: Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme

LGBTQIA+: Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer Intersex and Asexual

LLG: Lifelong Learning

NCCA: National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

NCGE: National Centre for Guidance in Education

NCSE: National Council for Special Education

NEPS: National Educational Psychological Service

PE: Physical Education

PDST: Professional Development Service for Teachers



Glossary contd.

PLC: Post Leaving Cert

PSI: Psychological Society of Ireland

PTR: Pupil Teacher Ratio

RE: Religious Education

RSE: Relationship & Sexuality Education

SC: Senior Cycle

SEN: Special Educational Needs

SOL: Statement of Learning

SPHE: Social, Personal and Health Education

SSE: School Self Evaluation

SUSI: Student Universal Support Ireland

TYP: Transition Year Programme

UCAS: University and Colleges Admissions Service

WSG: Whole School Guidance



Introduction

One of the aims of any secondary school is to provide an academic service to its students that will fulfill their needs and allow them to pursue their chosen field of further study, training, or to enable them to enter the world of work.

The journey through the adolescent years is one of physical, emotional, and psychological change. They are required to cope with, among other things, new feelings, new responsibilities, an emerging sense of independence, peer influences, academic pressures and above all, a growing sense of his/ her new self. For the adolescent to cope successfully with this new world and emerge into adulthood, support and assistance should be provided by all those charged with responsibility for the broader needs of the individual.

The National Centre for Guidance in Education describes guidance provision in secondary schools as "...aimed at students from the ages of 12 to 18 and relates to programmes from levels 3 to 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications". It further states that "guidance in post-primary schools is a whole school activity that is integrated into all school programmes". (NCGE 2017)

This guidance plan outlines the range of activities through which Ardcoil Rath Iomgháin addresses the needs of the student by helping each student in their personal, social, educational, and career development. Where applicable, each activity is linked to:

- **the three developmental aims of: developing myself, developing my learning and developing my career path (NCGE 2017)**
- **and support and guidance for *all, some* and a *few, in* accordance with the Education Act (1998) that requires schools to ensure each student has access to appropriate guidance.**



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Our Mission Statement

This school, being a source of pride in the community, aspires to the holistic development of its students, embracing the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual dimensions of their lives. Students will be challenged and encouraged to achieve their full potential through the recognition and reward of their effort and responsibilities, allowing them to feel confident in their ability to take their place as valued members of our society. Cultural differences will be respected. The good name and reputation of the school as an institution must be nurtured and protected for the benefit of all pupils. Each of the partners, teachers, parents and students have roles and responsibilities which must be fulfilled if successful educational outcomes are to be achieved. Ardcoil Rath Iomghain supports the principles of;

- Inclusiveness
- Equality of access and participation in the school
- Parental choice in relation to enrollments, subject to the school's enrolment policy.
- Respect for diversity of traditions, values, beliefs, languages and ways of life in society.

The school operates within the context and parameters of DES (Department of Education and Skills) regulations, programmes, funding and staffing resources. The school acknowledges the rights of its Trustees as set out in the legislation.



Definition of Guidance

Guidance provision is seen as a school-wide responsibility, involving the collaboration of school management, the guidance counsellor and all teachers, parents, past pupils, and the community at large. In addition, the Guidance Plan should have objectives that are clear, realistic, specific and measurable as well as balancing the needs of all junior and senior cycle students in a developmental and comprehensive way.

The provision of guidance in schools is a requirement of the Education Act (1998). Section 9c of the Education Act states that a school shall “use its available resources to ... (c) ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices” (Government of Ireland 1998). Guidance in schools includes “personal and social, educational and career guidance delivered within a whole school context” (DES, 2016a, pg 7) and is defined as:

“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 . . . ” (DES, 2005, pg.4)

This definition highlights the holistic nature of guidance in supporting students’ social and personal, educational and career development and the important role guidance plays in facilitating decision making and life choices, and in promoting and supporting students’ wellbeing.

Guidance in Ardscoil Rath Iomghain, refers to a range of learning experiences, provided in a developmental sequence, that assist pupils to develop self-management skills which will lead to effective choices and decisions about their lives.

Guidance is viewed as a continuum, an on-going process which begins before the student enters the school and continues when the student leaves. While Guidance and Counselling is delivered by the professionally trained school Guidance Counsellor(s), it is also acknowledged that Guidance is a whole-school approach and management, teaching staff, year heads, SEN, parents and students are all important stakeholders whose input is welcomed in the delivery of this Guidance Counselling service.



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Counselling is viewed in this context as an interactive learning process between counsellor and student which approaches, in a holistic way the personal, educational and/or vocational needs of the student. The availability of a counselling service can offer support to individual pupils outside the classroom context and help staff to support these pupils in the classroom. The counselling service also aims to support both the pastoral care and the disciplinary structures in the school. Bullying, social exclusion, family crisis, scholastic under-achievement, abuse, sexual identity issues, peer pressure, anxiety issues, depression, self-esteem issues, self harm, substance misuse are some of the issues with which students present to the Guidance Department and which can be assisted with the support of the counselling service.

While Guidance Counselling is described as three distinct areas the reality is that these areas are inextricably linked. A holistic approach is used in delivering a Guidance service to support student's development in Ardscoil Rath Iomghain. This is achieved through timetabled lessons, presentations and one-to-one interventions. As guidance is a whole-school concern, the plan applies to school management and staff generally.

Policy Developments & Initiatives

The plan operates within a legislative framework and takes account of the developments as far back as 1998 and the many more recent developments within the educational sector;

- **Section 9(C) of the Education Act, 1998:** relating to students' access to appropriate guidance in assisting them in their educational and career choices
- **Department of Education and Skills Circular Letter 09/2012:** this states 'Guidance in 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 three separate but interlinked areas of personal and social development, educational guidance and career guidance'

The circular goes on to state that schools need to 'ensure that the guidance counsellor has one to one time towards meeting the counselling needs of the students facing emotional difficulties or crisis.

- **The Education Welfare Act, 2000:** This act provides for structures to be put into place which will encourage and promote school attendance, and which will assist parents with in providing for the education of their children outside the school system.



- **The Equality Act, 2010:** This states that it is unlawful for any education provider to discriminate between pupils on grounds of disability, race, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief or sex.
- **Circular Letter 0015/2017 Arrangements for the Implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle with reference to school years 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 (DES, 2017d):** This circular letter states that guidance must be included in the Junior Cycle programme and that schools can include guidance in Wellbeing.
- **Action Plan for Education 2017 (DES, 2017c):** Key themes identified for 2017 include Wellbeing and Guidance services. Guidance services will be enhanced, and a review of guidance services, tools and careers information will be taken in 2017.
- **Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines** Guidance is highlighted as supporting ‘learning about wellbeing and learning for wellbeing’ for all students in junior cycle and is regarded as one of the main pillars for developing the Wellbeing programme in schools.
- **Looking At Our Schools 2016: A Quality Framework for Post-Primary Schools (DES, 2016c):** Learning is seen as holistic and central to the development of students’ wellbeing. As guidance is defined as “a range of learning experiences . . .” the quality framework encompasses guidance provision in the school.
- **School Self Evaluation Guidelines 2016-2020 Post Primary (DES, 2016c):** The Framework supports schools in reviewing practice in relation to learning and teaching and in developing action plans to improve practice. As with the quality framework presented in Looking At Our Schools 2016 the SSE Guidelines facilitate the evaluation and development of a school’s guidance programme.
- **Ireland’s National Skills Strategy 2025 (DES, 2016e):** This Strategy is part of a government’s plan to restore full employment and build a sustainable economy. The Strategy identifies the need for information that is accessible to all who are making educational and career choices and to those who are supporting them including guidance counsellors.
- **Framework for Junior Cycle 2015 (DES, 2015a):** The DES highlights that guidance provision may be included in the 400 hours available for Wellbeing and that activities related to guidance can be delivered through other learning experiences also.
- **Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020 – Enhancing Teaching, Learning and Assessment (DES, 2015b):** This Strategy has 4 themes and theme 1 includes the provision for the



school guidance programme and there are many opportunities for activities of the programme to be delivered using ICT.

- **NEPS Well-being in Post Primary Schools. Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention (2013):** Schools play an important role in promoting mental health and wellbeing of young people. A continuum of support model is provided as a framework for schools to employ in supporting the emotional, behavioural, social and learning needs of all students.
- **The NCGE School Guidance Handbook:** this online resource supports the design, development and delivery of the whole school guidance programme. The Handbook provides guidelines and resources in relation to the development of good practice in schools.



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Rationale

This School Guidance and Counselling plan is a structured document that describes the school guidance programme in Ardscoil Rath Iomghain, as a whole school approach and specifies how the guidance needs of students are to be addressed.

Section 9 (c) of the Education Act, 1998 requires Ardscoil Rath Iomghain to “*ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices*” based on the need to provide access as determined by the general resources available and the additional resource allocation for guidance and counselling and other related activities provided by the DES and the need to provide appropriate guidance that is, the whole school’s response to meeting the guidance needs of all of its students.

Aims & Objectives



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One of the aims of any secondary school is to provide an academic service to its students that will fulfil their needs and allow them to pursue their chosen field of further study, training, or to enable them to enter the world of work.

The Guidance and Counselling service in Ardscoil Rath Iomghain, strives to foster a holistic approach to meet the guidance needs of the members of our school community within the context of our mission statement.

Our Whole School Guidance Plan **aims** to:

- Set out the learning experiences and activities of the guidance programme
- Reflect the needs of both Junior and Senior Cycle students
- Achieve a balance in the provision of social & personal, educational and career guidance offered to students.

The **objectives** of our Whole School Guidance Plan are to enable students achieve the following outcomes:

- To clarify social, educational and career goals
- To address personal issues
- To identify and explore opportunities within school life and beyond
- To grow in independence and resilience and to take responsibility for themselves
- To make informed choices about their lives and follow through on these choices
- To acknowledge and support each person's role in the school community

The **objectives** of our Whole School Guidance Plan are to enable teachers and stakeholders achieve the following outcomes:

- To nurture teaching and learning so that everyone can reach their full potential
- To support the development of every student
- To acknowledge and support each person's role in the school community
- To provide an environment where everyone can develop self-esteem and a sense of personal responsibility
- To provide an environment where everyone can develop a place in society and a responsibility to society
- To monitor the well-being of all students
- To apply best practice in the protection of students and the promotion of their welfare using the resources available in accordance with DES and School Child Protection Policy
- To work effectively with statutory authorities and outside agencies as and when required.



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School Wide Responsibility

In conjunction with the school management, the Guidance Counsellor is seen as having a central role in the planning and delivery of the school's guidance and counselling programme in conjunction with the Whole School Guidance Plan. Given that the provision of a well-being and guidance programme should not be seen as the remit of one person or one team in the school, it is desirable that all staff as far as possible should have an important and worthwhile contribution to make in the planning and delivery of many aspects of the Whole School Guidance Programme. Therefore, this Whole School Guidance Programme will explore all means to assist the student in their personal, social, educational and career development.

Whole School Guidance (WSG) planning involves active collaboration among key contributors within the school community to address individual student needs. Engaging in webinars, collaborative efforts and continuing professional development related to guidance planning fosters a deeper comprehension of the intricate nature of whole school Guidance planning.

A Whole School Guidance Team (WSG) was established in January 2024. Through shared discussions and problem-solving, the WSG Team will set actionable targets to fulfil the specific needs of our school context and student body.

The WSG Team will collaboratively design and develop a whole-school Guidance plan as a means of supporting the needs of all students. It is important that all members of staff fully recognise and ensure that Guidance permeates every aspect of school life and the plan is developed in collaboration with teachers, students, parents, and the wider school community.

Department of Education 2022, Staffing Arrangements Circular

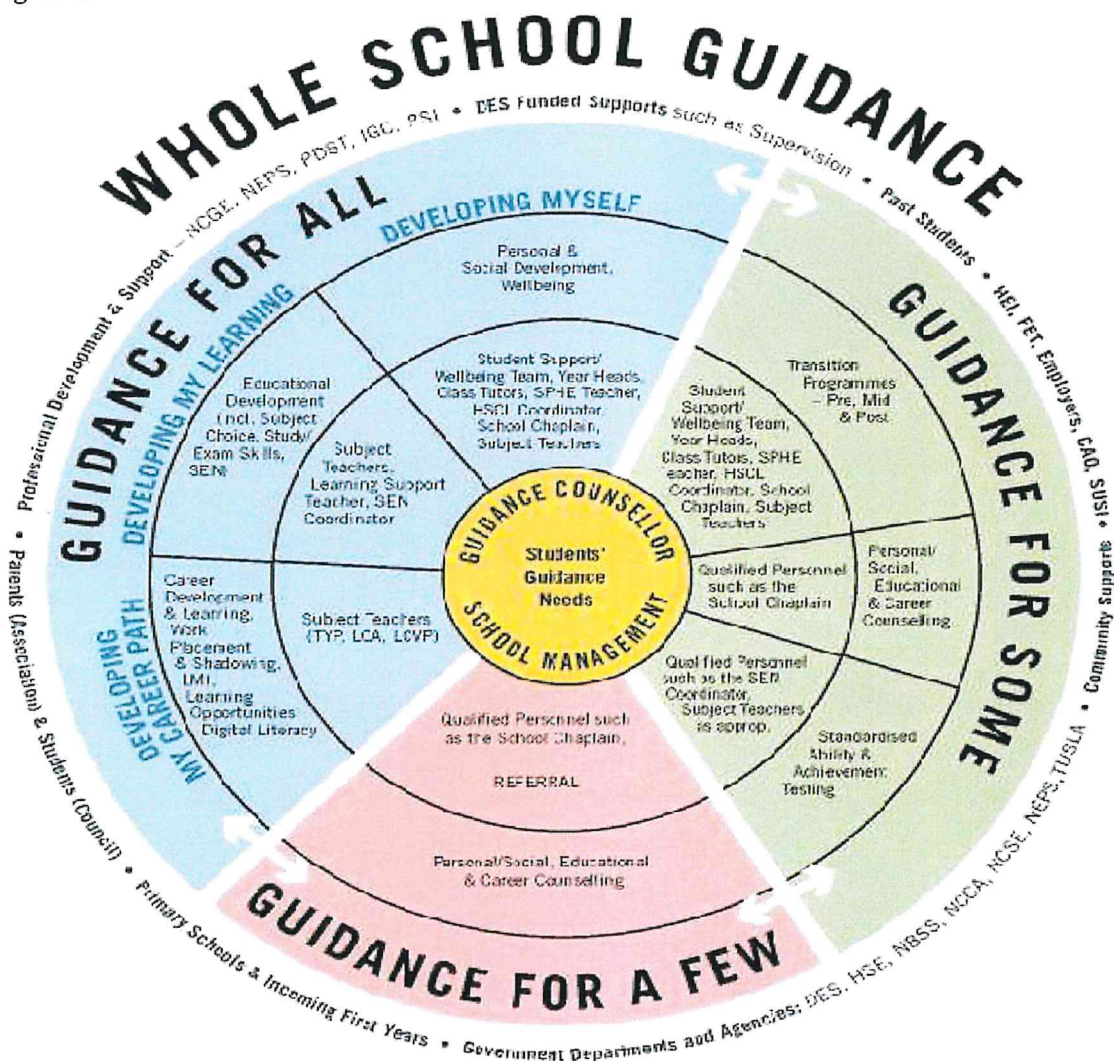
Whole School Guidance Framework

Figure 1 below (*courtesy of NCGE: A Whole School Guidance Framework*) shows



the continuum of support model on which our School approach to guidance is offered. The guidance counsellor, in collaboration with school management and staff, and external organisations/personnel, delivers a wide range of activities and learning to support students' personal & social, educational and career development. The guidance counsellor plays a central role in the design and delivery of the Whole School Guidance Programme.

Figure 1



Application of Continuum of Support

The continuum model is applied as follows:



GUIDANCE FOR ALL: This is provided to all students to support personal & social, educational, and career development, and students making transitions (incoming first years, junior cycle to senior cycle and from senior cycle into apprenticeships, FET, HE and employment. The school focuses on the 6 Junior Cycle Wellbeing Indicators to nurture students who are – ‘Active’, ‘Responsible’, ‘Connected’, ‘Resilient’, ‘Respected’ and ‘Aware’. The guidance counsellor as the specialist has a key role to play in coordinating the planning and delivery of the whole school guidance programme and in the provision of guidance to students. A whole school approach is employed in delivering the learning and teaching activities of the school guidance programme which include (but are not limited to):

- Morning Assemblies on Monday and Friday
- Active role of Year Head and Class Tutor as a main contact person for the student
- Student mentoring programme
- AEN Team
- SNA Team
- School Psychotherapist who is available to students as needs arise
- Each Class Group at Junior Cycle is assigned a Guidance Counsellor
- Mixed ability teaching for all subjects in First Year
- Whole school events such as College Awareness Week (CAW), Stand Up Awareness Week, Engineers week, Maths Week, Languages Week, Science Week and Sports Fun Day
- Class interventions on anti-bullying, attendance and positive wellbeing, Restorative Practice.
- Team teaching and Assessment for Learning (AFL) to maximise learning in the school, actively working towards the goals as set out in the LAOS document.
- A wide selection of extra-curricular activities to promote personal growth
- An active Students Council and Parents Association who actively support the needs of the school body
- Discussion on Whole School Guidance Planning at all staff meetings
- Career Education programmes; REACH +, STEM Passport for Inclusion, Higher Options, World Apprenticeships Fair, Careers Fairs, Open Days, Careers webinars
- SPHE, RSE and Wellbeing in JC
- Guidance modules and work experience provided as part of LCA, TY and LCVP in senior cycle.
- Guidance-related learning for Junior Cycle classes

GUIDANCE FOR SOME: provided to specific groups of students to support personal and social, educational and career development and transition making. Such groups of students will typically include, for example, students in senior cycle, especially 6th year, who will benefit



from group and one-to-one guidance counselling to support educational and career decision making, and students who are making transitions. Transition points include, primary school into first year of post-primary education, junior cycle to senior cycle, and school to higher/further education and training, apprenticeships and employment. Some students may require additional and more intensive support in making transitions. Group/one-to-one guidance counselling will require the expertise of specialist school staff, such as the guidance counsellor working in collaboration with the pastoral care team/student support team, SPHE teacher, SEN Coordinator, year heads, and class tutors.

GUIDANCE FOR A FEW: Students may require support in meeting their developmental needs and when they experience personal crises. Some students may also require more intensive support as they make transitions (including Early School Leavers and those transitioning to other education and training centres such as Youthreach). Others may need extra support with important decisions during their time in post primary schools.

This support will require the expertise of specialised school staff with the necessary knowledge, skills and competences to respond to the needs of these students and will involve the Guidance Counsellor, and other school staff who have been trained in meeting the needs of vulnerable students and those who may have additional needs.

In the event that the student requires more intensive support, referral to external agencies and support should be employed. In the event of a protracted referral the School Counsellor/ Guidance Counsellor/staff member may need to provide continued support to the student.

Whole School Guidance Areas of Learning & Competences

Figure 2 below: (Courtesy of NCGE: A Whole School Guidance Framework) Guidance-related learning starts in early childhood education and continues through students' primary and post



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primary education. As part of this holistic development, students in Ardcoil Rath Iomgháin are exposed to the 3 areas of guidance-related learning to allow them to develop in 8 areas of competence. These areas of learning aim to build on the learning that students will have experienced during their years in primary education.

Figure 2



Developing Myself

Developing and maintaining, self-esteem and a positive self-concept: through guidance and wellbeing classes in junior cycle classes, most especially with incoming first year students.

Interacting effectively with others (face to face and online): following a programme to educate adolescents on effective communication both online and in person as well as online safety is covered.

Developing and growing throughout life: communication skills, empathy and recognising and honouring differences would be the core learning.

Developing My Learning

Employing effective personal learning/ exam strategies: through both targeted and class group study skills sessions as well as through resource hours.



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Making educational choices in line with career aspirations: subject teachers giving a tester classes during Transition Year and students researching their future career plans and what the required subjects would be for 3rd level courses or their apprenticeship training.

Developing My Career Path

Using career-related information and sources appropriately: currently Ardcoil Rath Iomgháin uses REACH+ programme for senior cycle students. The programme starts at TY and is used throughout TY, 5th and 6th year to facilitate students to make informed decisions about their future career pathways. This is supported through a multitude of self-assessment activities, personal reflections, career research tasks, Guidance class information sessions and career interest tests.

Understanding the world of work and life roles: Beginning in TY, students have a weekly guidance class to receive group guidance. More individualised guidance for 5th and 6th year students receiving one to one guidance meetings with the Guidance Counsellor as well as subject teachers as appropriate to consider possible career options. Guest speakers/ Webinars from outside agencies. Career research projects.

Managing career development and decision making: a weekly guidance class for all TY, 5th and 6th year students, as well as a more targeted and guidance meeting with 6th years prior to CAO deadline in February. Online information evening for the parents of 6th years in September. In person 'Post Leaving Cert Options Information Evening,' for the parents of 6th years in January, providing information about CAO and the many other options that are potentially available to their son or daughter. One to one Meetings with 5th years before the end of the academic year to give them the opportunity to consider their options before starting their final year in secondary school.

GUIDANCE: A WHOLE SCHOOL ACTIVITY – ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Guidance is not provided exclusively by any one individual or group. It is a holistic process that benefits from the synergy of many working together with a shared vision towards a common goal. Whole School Guidance Planning enables our school to identify, prioritise and respond to the guidance needs of students using the resources available. When one considers the three dimensions of guidance (personal & social, educational and career), all members of the teaching staff are in some way involved in providing guidance to students. This may be in morning



assembly, informally through supervision and substitution, advice given in homework club or class, lunchtime activities to stimulate personal and social growth, classroom interactions, general advice relating to the standards required of students, parent-teacher-student meetings, phone calls home, reports home, etc.

However, it is the responsibility of the Guidance Counsellor to coordinate the guidance programme under the direction of senior management. A Whole School Approach thus ensures that our school maximises its resources for guidance through the identification of roles and responsibilities for school management and staff in the provision of appropriate guidance to students. The main roles and responsibilities within our school are:

(a) Board of Management

The Board of Management has a responsibility to ensure that the provision and practice of guidance in the school is of the highest possible standard. The Board of Management manages the school in accordance with the Education Act (1998) and the Articles of Management for Voluntary Secondary Schools. Each school is required to comply with the Education Act (1998) and provide students with "access to appropriate guidance".

(b) Senior Management

The Principal controls the internal organisation and management of the school, and exercises supervision over the teaching and non-teaching staff. The Deputy Principal oversees the school in the absence of the Principal. In the absence of the Principal and Deputy Principal, an Assistant Principal is placed in charge of the school. The Senior Management team also has a responsibility to ensure that Whole School Guidance is of the highest possible standard. This includes managing the process of guidance planning in cooperation with the guidance counsellor, school staff and other school partners such as parents.

(C) Guidance Counsellor

Guidance Counsellors, because of their specialist training, have a professional role in each of the main areas of guidance: personal and social, educational, and career. Within personal and social, their role for example may involve publicising to the students and at parents' meetings the work 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). Their educational role involves many aspects such as induction of first years, assisting the SEN co-



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ordinator in assessing incoming students prior to the student's entry to the school or liaising with management, year heads, and class teachers, subject teachers etc. concerning pupils who require intervention or offering those pupils counselling with regard to study techniques, educational planning and personal organisation. Their career role may involve addressing all students in 3rd Year and Transition Year prior to them choosing their subjects for the Leaving Certificate. Subject information evening for both the parents and the students. The Guidance Counsellor will also address a meeting of parents on the same topic. In addition, the guidance counsellor has a key role in collaborating with school management in the development and review of the Whole School Guidance Plan and the integration of guidance into the curriculum.

The Guidance Counsellor works collaboratively with all staff members and management. They meet regularly with the principal, deputy principal and additional support staff. The guidance counsellor has strong links with outside supportive agencies and is a member of the care team and critical incident teams.

The Guidance Counsellor as a mandated person is also well positioned, due to the nature of their work, to react to any child protection concerns.

(E) Student Care Team

The Student Care Team is made up of Management, Guidance Counsellor, SEN Coordinator, Chaplain, HSL and other representatives from the staff body. The Team meets weekly to review the needs of students at the levels of "All", "Some" and "Few". The Team strives to provide a response to student needs by liaising with the SPHE and RE teachers and by inviting outside agencies to cover specific issues where appropriate. This is a forum for sharing information and concerns in a safe and confidential setting. The focus of such meetings is on the support needs of all students with time also allotted to interventions for some and for few. Matters discussed at Pastoral Care/Student Support Team Meetings relating to individual cases is confidential to the team and any follow up required is decided upon and assigned to a member of the team.

(F) SEN Coordinator

The SEN Coordinator, subject to the direction of the principal, assumes responsibility for the overall provision for special educational needs within the school. They coordinate the data gathering, screening and testing in relation to the special educational needs of students. They plan for the transition of students identified as having special educational needs to and from post primary school. They take a lead role in planning, implementation and review of student support plans. They support the communication of information regarding students' needs to subject



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teachers and year heads. They liaise with special needs assistants, the Guidance Counsellor, Year heads and subject teachers. They also liaise with outside agencies such as NEPS, the NCSE and allied health professionals. They make applications for reasonable accommodations in the State Examinations for students with special educational needs.

(G) Subject teachers

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

(H) Year Head

The Year Head has general responsibility for the welfare of a year group. It is hugely valuable that the year head meets with their year group on rotation with the tutor for 10 minutes on Mondays and Fridays. This contact time allows the year head to check in with the students, pass on relevant information and observe students' disposition. Its effectiveness is widely recognised by all members of the school community, staff, students and parents.

The year head oversees the student's attendance, punctuality, uniform, academic performance monitoring and behaviour and liaises with the parents/guardians of the year group. The Year Head works closely with the subject teachers, Guidance Counsellor, Deputy Principal and Principal. The Year Head also links with outside agencies in conjunction with the above.

(I) Special Needs Assistants (SNA's)

The Special Needs Assistant plays a key role in ensuring the successful inclusion of children with special educational needs into mainstream education and also to support these students to navigate their school day.



(J) Guest Speakers

Guest Speakers are engaged by school personnel to support the three dimensions/areas of Guidance. Guest speakers are designed to bring their own unique experience, knowledge, expertise to the student, staff and parental body. Guest Speakers work in conjunction with existing school programmes/subjects/areas of guidance to augment and support existing provision.

(K) Parents

This Plan adopts the legal definition of parent as set down in the Education Act, 1998. The Plan recognises that parents play a pivotal role in developing, promoting and supporting the growth of their child both at home and within the school. Parents play a vital role in shaping their children's attitude to school. A supportive home environment shapes attitudes that promote the holistic development of the child. It is important that parents are aware of and support this Plan together with other school policies and procedures. Parents are further encouraged to involve themselves in positive participation in school life in order to facilitate the development of mutual and beneficial links between school and home. Parents can also participate in the guidance process through:

- Consultation with the guidance counsellor and other school staff,
- Attendance at relevant information and other meetings at school,
- Participating in seminars on topics of interest to parents and pupils (with approval of the BOM)
- Contributing to the development and review of the Whole School Guidance Plan and, when possible, providing personal assistance to the school guidance programme.

(L) Students

This Plan seeks to attend to the welfare of every student and their right to participate in and benefit from education. It helps students to focus on their personal responsibility for their own behaviour and to experience the value of being a responsible and participatory member of the school community in Ardscoil Rath Iomgháin. Students have an important part to play in



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creating and sustaining a positive atmosphere of mutual trust and respect that nurtures teaching and learning. The student voice is highly valued in our school, so the Student Council affords students an opportunity to voice their opinion, become involved in the daily life of their school and effect change.

Wellbeing, SPHE, PE and CSPE collectively cover many aspects of Social and Personal Development. Here, students develop an awareness of their own needs and difficulties and come to know how to ask and who to ask for advice and help. Because St Anne's Secondary School adopts a whole school approach to guidance, students are free to approach any member of staff with their concerns. Accordingly, a student may talk to a subject teacher, year head, guidance counsellor, support staff member, deputy principal and principal as they see fit. Fellow students also have a part to play in supporting their peers in difficulty.



Transitions, Pathways and Opportunities

Focusing on Transitions

In our school, it is recognized that students will experience a number of transitions. Each transition can be characterised as having a potential impact on a student's sense of self, their learning and their career path. Hence, the following 'transitions' are identified as regularly occurring in our school and supported through Whole School Guidance as follows:

Year group & activity	Guidance for All	Guidance for Some	Guidance for a few
<p>From primary school to post primary</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ School 'Open Night' each October ➤ Guidance counsellor and HSCL visit the primary schools in May. Meet and greet with students Q&A. ➤ Informal, building rapport with the students. Answering questions, sharing information about the school. Abating worries. ➤ Induction day in late August ➤ Activities focused on helping students settle into school life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Students requiring additional support meet with an appropriate/ nominated person from the 'Student Support Teams.' ➤ A detailed and purposely compiled 'welcome pack' is available on the school website. ➤ Contact with feeder primary school and parents in advance to assess supports required. ➤ Guidance teachers and the AEN team work closely with the students to assess needs and provide support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Parents and students meet with the school principal during the summer months where circumstances are extraordinary. ➤ Attendance is monitored by tutors and HSCL and those with irregular attendance are contacted to assess support required by the Home School Coordinator.



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Year group & activity	Guidance for All	Guidance for Some	Guidance for a few
	<p>The Meitheal team (6th Year students) are actively involved with the Transition programme. Building the group within each class.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Introductory assembly- meeting (Year Head, tutors, Guidance Counsellor)➤ Study skills: methods, study space, SMART goals, managing time . Notes and folder.➤ Mentoring/ look out system put in place with 6th year Meitheal leaders and 1st year groups.➤ Induction activities in September. Building the group, supporting the establishment of friendships.➤ First year parents information evening in early September.➤ Check in meeting: each 1st year student meets with the yearhead. Building rapport.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Supports such as Art Club, run during lunch time.➤ Board games in the library.	



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Year group & activity	Guidance for All	Guidance for Some	Guidance for a few
From 1 st year to 2 nd year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ End of year assembly by year head focusing on transition. ➤ Study skills delivered to students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Relevant supports put in place for students re: study/ organisation skills. E.g.: support with timetable/ use of lockers and generally settling into their new environment. ➤ ‘Homework Club’ facilitated by the school for 1 hour each day- available to those who require support/ on the DIES list. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Students displaying challenging behaviour have one-to-one meetings with the year head to set targets for 2nd year. Restorative Practice interventions. ➤ Attendance is monitored by tutors and HSCL and those with irregular attendance are contacted to assess support required.
From 2 nd year to 3 rd year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ End of year assembly with the Principal and year head. ➤ Study skills seminar with all students organised by Guidance Counsellor ➤ Studycix is available to all students at a reduced subscription rate, 15 or 30 euro. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Students who require extra support around CBAs identified and supported by tutors/ and subject teachers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Students who have demonstrated poor attendance at the end of 2nd year meet with year head and parents at the beginning of 3rd year
From 3 rd year to Transition Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Parent and student evening outlining programme options-TY, 5th year, LCA, LCVP and work experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Meetings with students going straight to 5th year re: subject choice and implications with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ meetings with students/ their parents, as required. ➤ Attendance is monitored by tutors and those with



Year group & activity	Guidance for All	Guidance for Some	Guidance for a few
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Input from GC, Teacher & current students of these programmes 	<p>Year Heads and Guidance Counsellor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Meeting LCA class candidates/ their parents. ➤ STEM PASSPORT for INCLUSION Programme, for the TY girls. 	<p>irregular attendance are contacted to assess supports required</p>
<p>From 3rd to 5th year From 3rd to 5th year</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Subject Information evening for parents and students. ➤ Opportunity to Meet with the guidance counsellor re subject options for Leaving cert. (Appointment) ➤ One to one meetings with the guidance counsellor offered to all. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Students can meet with Guidance Counsellor to discuss subject options for Senior Cycle. 	



Year group & activity	Guidance for All	Guidance for Some	Guidance for a few
From TY to 5 th year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Subject choice information sessions with the GC and LC subject teachers. ➤ Work experience- support re:-CV & cover letter preparation. ➤ -Seeking work ➤ -Change of environment & expectations ➤ -Reflective journaling ➤ -Coping with setbacks ➤ 'Check ins' on site coordinated by the TY coordinator ➤ Attendance at open days/ career events. ➤ College visit ➤ Tea/Coffee morning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 'Taster' classes made available during TY to those who wish to sample a new subject offered at Leaving Cert prior to choosing one. ➤ Honours Maths, TY students are introduced to a number of topics. Allow students an insight into the subject. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Attendance is monitored by tutors and HSCL and those with irregular attendance are contacted to assess support required. ➤ Students can arrange appointments with The GC, to discuss how they are settling into 5th year. ➤ Students are referred for meetings by Senior management and/or year head. Support for students that are struggling with the transition to Senior Cycle. or that teachers have expressed concerns about.
From 5 th year to 6 th year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Invited speakers re: future options (education/ employment) ➤ Attendance at open days/ career events both in person and online. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Individual appointments for those who need extra support with study. Support with creating a timetable, study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Attendance is monitored by tutors and those with irregular attendance are contacted to assess support required.



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Year group & activity	Guidance for All	Guidance for Some	Guidance for a few
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mock interviews conducted with parents/ volunteers in advance of PLC and LCA exam interviews etc. ➤ Studyclix reduced subscription 15 or 30 euro. ➤ Study skills for all through Guidance class. Classroom guidance presentations on how to study. SMART goals. ➤ Guidelines on how to manage study and homework. ➤ Tea/Coffee mornings ➤ Study timetable given to all and guidance on how to set study targets. 	<p>methods, timing and coordinating study with their extra curricular activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Regular check-ins with the guidance counsellor to help students build their confidence.
<p>From 6th year to life after school</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ One to one career guidance support offered to all. ➤ Attendance at open days/ career events ➤ Guest speakers throughout the year sharing information on the many options that are available to students post LC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Small group support is provided to those requiring it re: DARE, HEAR and SUSI. ➤ Individual appointments for students and their parents, support to complete the DARE application. Personal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Further one to one meetings with the GC, and subject teachers as required to evaluate options and formalize plans for after school.



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Year group & activity	Guidance for All	Guidance for Some	Guidance for a few
<p>From 6th year to life after school. (contd)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mock interviews conducted with parents/ volunteers in advance of PLC and LCA exam interviews etc. ➤ HEAR/DARE/Susi information disseminated to all. ➤ CAO information evening (in person) for the 6th year parents. The 6th year students are also invited to attend. ➤ May of 6th year Transition Programme to support students as their Secondary School Education draws to a close. ➤ Transition Pack given to all 6th years. ➤ Wellbeing events; Tea/ Coffee morning ➤ Student Graduation: A Series of events to mark the coming to an end of their Secondary school Education. 	<p>Statement, EIS form, accessing supporting documents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Further One to one meetings available with the GC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Appointments available to those who struggle with the CAO application.(English not first language/other reasons)



Year group & activity	Guidance for All	Guidance for Some	Guidance for a few
<p>Moving from one subject level to another</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consult with the subject teacher and also discuss with the GC re how the move may or may not impact on their post LC options. ➤ Student wellbeing is the primary concern. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Students are facilitated if they wish to move 'up' a level by speaking with the subject teacher and guidance counsellor. ➤ Students will need to 'check in' with the subject teacher & guidance counsellor (and receive permission from their parent/ guardian) if moving 'down' a level to assess potential implications on future choices.
<p>Moving from one subject to another</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All 1st year students undertake a 'taster' module of option subjects during their first term- this has eliminated difficulty with changing subjects in our school at junior cycle in general. ➤ GC speaks to first years, tailored for first years about future career choices and subject choices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Where some students do not get their first-choice subject options, the closest alternative is made available to them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Students will need to 'check in' with the guidance counsellor and receive permission from their parents if changing a subject to assess potential implications on future choices.



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Year group & activity	Guidance for All	Guidance for Some	Guidance for a few
Between friendship groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ All students undertake a module of senior cycle subjects as part of their transition year.➤ Exploring relationships/ friendships through SPHE/RSE:<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Coping with change/loss-Joining a new group-Appreciating difference-Bullying-Making good decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Buddy system in place for 1st/2nd Year students with Meitheal Leaders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Individualised support may be required in certain instances.



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Parents

Parents are informed/supported with 'Transitions' throughout the school year in the following ways:

Parents of incoming 1st years are informed of information relating to transitions through:

- (i) School Open Night
- (ii) Letter to those who are accepted in line with the Admissions Policy

Parents of 1st year students:

- (i) Have access to students' timetable through VShare and can help students prepare books/equipment etc. for each day.
- (ii) In person Information evening in early September for the parents/guardians of the 1st year students. Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Head, Guidance Counsellor, Home School Liaison. Opportunity for Q & A after the talk. 'Supporting the Transition'
- (iii) Attend parent teacher meetings for updates with teachers on how their child is getting on.
- (iv) Google Classroom: Parents can view information shared with the student.

Parents of 2nd year students:

- (i) Can monitor their child's attendance / attainment and behaviour through VShare.
- (ii) Can connect with the Year Head through a designated telephone/ email.
- (iii) Information evening for parents in September.

Parents of 3rd year

- (i) Can monitor their child's attendance / attainment and behaviour through VShare.
- (ii) Can connect with the Year Head through a designated telephone/ email.
- (iii) Information evening for parents in September.

Parents of TY

- (i) Can monitor their child's attendance / attainment and behaviour through VShare.
- (ii) Can connect with the TY Coordinator through a designated telephone/ email.
- (iv) Can connect with the GC through a designated telephone/ email.

Parents of 5th and 6th year

- (i) Can monitor their child's attendance / attainment and behaviour through VShare.
- (ii) Can connect with the Year Head through a designated telephone/ email.
- (iii) Can connect with the GC through a designated telephone/ email.



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Whole School Approach

- Whole School Guidance Team Established January 2025
- The Guidance Counsellor has monthly meetings with the school principal in order to ascertain the needs emerging for all year groups throughout the academic year.
- Year Heads are regularly in touch with parents as highlighted.
- Subject teachers all follow the same procedures if a student wishes to change a subject level.
- Support of Pastoral Care Team.



Focusing on Opportunities

In our school, students will be provided with a number of opportunities throughout the academic year. Some of the 'typical' opportunities occurring each year include the following:

Year group & activity	Guidance for All	Guidance for Some	Guidance for a few
Sports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sports Scholarships' are introduced to all students during their Guidance Classes in 5th and 6th year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Guidance Counsellor and PE teachers support students who are applying for scholarships on information gathering and completion of the application.
Competitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All TY students are encouraged to participate in multiple competitions including Mini-Med, Look into Law as well as any other opportunities they can take part in. ➤ TY and 5th year groups are encouraged to take part in summer schools, most recent competitions have been offered by Maynooth on reduced cost for DEIS schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Competitions relating to Guidance are advertised on the Guidance notice board. Students are invited to participate in line with their level of interest. 	



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Year group & activity	Guidance for All	Guidance for Some	Guidance for a few
Scholarships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Scholarships are introduced to all students during 6th year Guidance Classes. 		
College/ University Open Days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All students attending college open days in TY/5th and 6th year are encouraged to facilitate discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) regarding European opportunities within Irish HEIs/CFEs (ii) with international universities 		
Student Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All students are informed about 'Student Council' at an assembly each year. Each class group elects two students (1 Male & 1 female) to represent their class on the student council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Students are encouraged to 'lead' in all aspects of school life e.g., sports teams / choir / drama etc. ➤ The school runs an extensive 'Student Council' programme. The elected members (1 male and 1 female from each class) students attend monthly meetings to raise issues and discuss school life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A Meitheal system (6th year students) and a mentor system are in operation in this school. 10 students are selected each year in March of 5th year. Training during the summer. September to May of 6th year., Meitheal leaders for the 1st year classes.



Year group & activity	Guidance for All	Guidance for Some	Guidance for a few
		➤ All 5th years are encouraged to apply for the Captain & Vice Captain role.	

Parents

Parents are informed about 'opportunities' throughout the school year in the following ways:

- Through regular email communication.
- Through the Guidance Counselling department link on the webpage, linked school website.
- 6th year Parents CAO/DARE/HEAR/ Future opportunities information evening.

Whole School Approach

Through parent teacher meetings and contact with parents as appropriate.

Focusing on Pathways

In our school, all pathways chosen by students are treated with respect. 'Pathways' are addressed within the 'Whole School Guidance Plan' as follows:



Year group & activity	Guidance for All	Guidance for Some	Guidance for a few
<p>Apprenticeships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Apprenticeships are addressed in Guidance Related Learning classes with all students in TY and 5th year as part of their weekly Guidance class. ➤ Attend the World Skills Ireland in the RDS in September. ➤ Guest speaker, past pupil who is participating in the apprenticeship programme came in to speak to TY, 5th & 6th years about her experience of being an apprenticeship electrician. ➤ Links with local Industries(Pfizer, Murphy Engineering) offering Apprenticeships. Speak to TY, 5th & 6th year students re the apprenticeship opportunities available and what is involved in following the apprenticeship route post Leaving Cert. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The GC works closely with students who select this pathway. ➤ The TY work experience coordinator provides references for students to help with finding placement with local businesses where possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Some students will choose to leave school after Junior Cycle to follow an apprenticeship programme. Where this is the case, the GC and year head meet with the student and their parents so that the student makes a fully informed choice.
<p>Apprenticeships (contd)</p>			



Year group & activity	Guidance for All	Guidance for Some	Guidance for a few
<p>Further Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Further Education is introduced in Transition Year Guidance Related Learning. ➤ Classes in 5th and 6th year further discuss FE. ➤ The GC organises a one to one meeting with each 6th year student to support them to find information on their chosen educational path. ➤ Guest speakers from FE colleges ➤ School visit to Carlow Institute of Further Education. This is open to all 6th years & 5th year LCA . 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The GC works closely with students who select this pathway. ➤ DARE students have one to one meetings to complete the EIS form for their application. A blank form is sent home and students and parents are asked to fill in the form where they can. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ DARE meeting with parent and student are arranged at an opportune time, so as to facilitate the completion of the DARE application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ HEAR & DARE as well as SUSI applications will be discussed in relation to Higher Education Options. ➤ Additional one to one meetings available for those who need extra support.
<p>Higher Education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Higher Education is discussed in Guidance Related Learning as well as during one to one career guidance meetings. ➤ Attend Higher Options event in the RDS ➤ Over the course of 6th year guest speakers are invited to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The GC organised a one to one meeting with each 6th year student to support them in looking at and finding the most suitable post leaving cert pathway. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ HEAR & DARE as well as SUSI applications will be discussed in relation to Higher Education Options. ➤ Additional one to one meetings available for those who need extra support.



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Year group & activity	Guidance for All	Guidance for Some	Guidance for a few
	<p>come and speak to the group about the opportunities available for them in the different Universities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Attend college Open Days.➤ The GC organises a one to one meeting with each 6th year student to support them to find information on their chosen educational/career path.➤ Tertiary Pathways: Launched July 2023. Students are informed about opportunities available to progress to a Level 8 degree. A joint further and higher education degree programme, tertiary education programmes begin in a local education and training board centre and finish in a university.		



Parents

Parents are informed about 'pathways' throughout the school year in the following ways:

- Through parents evening organised in October of each year for parents of 6th year students.
- Through regular communication on the GC webpage linked on the school website.
- Parent teacher meetings, opportunity to have one to one meetings with the GC.

Whole School Approach

- Subject teachers to discuss options at parent teacher meetings.
- School management to communicate with parents when there is a particular issue to be addressed.
- College Awareness Week: Teachers share with the students information about their journey to teaching. Whole school approach, first class in the morning, 'Drop Everything and Talk about College'. Followed by a Q & A session. Teachers complete 'My Journey to Here...' posters, these are displayed for everyone to read in the hallway outside the library.
- Guidance notice boards: sharing information with all of the school community.
- Google classroom accounts for all of the guidance classes. Weekly updates on events/ information relevant to the different year groups.
- Study skills classes given to 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 5th and 6th year students.
- Apprenticeship Notice Boards: Details about Apprenticeship Options, how to become an Apprentice. Information about live apprenticeship positions that might be of interest to our students.
- Tertiary Pathways notice board. Details outlining the opportunities that the NTO has available to students after the completion of the Leaving Certificate.
- Well Being Notice Board: Information about the supports available to all of the members of our school community.



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Other Considerations:

School Structure

The student population in Ardscoil Rath Iomghain, is divided into classes of mixed ability. All year groups have a Year Head. The Year Head looks after the welfare of their relevant year group and remains in constant contact with the students as well as parents throughout the year. The Year Head also has a disciplinary role within the school structure. Twice weekly assemblies also allow coordination with school management.

The Guidance department recognises the importance of this system in our school and fosters a cooperative relationship with School Management and Year Heads in order to best meet our student's needs. The Guidance Counsellor attends the weekly senior year head meetings and the SEN Coordinator attends the weekly junior year head meetings.

Appointments

Students requiring assistance, advice or support can approach any staff member at any time. A staff member may have formal classes and so may be unable to consult with the student immediately. If this is the case a follow up appointment will be made. Students who have an appointment through the School Counselling Service for personal or career counselling are provided with an appointment. The student must inform the relevant teacher of this appointment time before attending. Students are advised to maximise their one-to-one time for career advice as multiple visits are not guaranteed. Follow up appointments, however, may be necessary and will be organised (typically to a max of 3 on a given issue/topic). Parents/Guardians may also make appointments with all staff members (including the Guidance Counsellor) by telephoning the school office. Appointments are conducted during the school day where possible. All parties are requested to inform each other if a cancellation is necessary. On occasion, a staff member may request another staff member e.g. Year Head, subject teacher or/and management to be present at a meeting. Notes may be made and kept at meetings.



Confidentiality

A professional relationship involving confidentiality is at the core of the Counselling Service in the school. The Guidance Counsellor 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. Confidentiality for students must be respected unless there is clear and immediate danger to the student or to others. Hence, confidentiality of the student 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 themselves or others;
- when a student discloses an intention to commit a crime;
- when the counsellor suspects abuse or neglect;
- in the case of abuse (Child Protection Guidelines definition applies here)
- when a court orders a counsellor to make records available;

All students are informed of the protocols surrounding confidentiality at their first meeting or prior to their first meeting. 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. Primarily School Management (Designated Liaison Person) and/or Parents are informed if the student is posing a danger to herself and/or to others. The School has clear procedures in the event of self-harm within the School, see Child Protection Policy.

The School in its duty of care adheres to the procedures as outlined in the 'Child Protection Guidelines for Post Primary Schools' and 'Children First, National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children' and in accordance with St Anne's Secondary School Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment.

The Child Protection Guidelines for Post Primary schools state in 4. 1. 1. and 4. 2. 1.:

4. 1. 1. If a member of staff receives an allegation or has a suspicion that a child may have been abused, or is being abused, or is at risk of abuse he/she should, without delay, report the matter to the Designated Liaison Person (Ms Colette Treacy) in that school. A written record of the report should be made and placed in a secure location by the Principal. The need for confidentiality should be borne in mind at all times. The supports of the school should continue to be made available to the child.
4. 2. 1. If the Principal is satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for the suspicion or allegation, she should report the matter to the relevant health board immediately.



Ethical Considerations and Accountability

The Guidance Counsellor is constantly aware of her responsibility to the student, to the school, to her own profession, to herself and to the implementation of this policy. The Guidance Counsellor will take part in professional peer supervision, which will provide support and feedback for her professional welfare. The Guidance Counsellor also abides by the Institute of Guidance Counsellors' **Code of Ethics**. Equally all school personnel abide by the **'Child Protection Guidelines for Post Primary Schools'** and **'Children First, National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children'**.

The Schools Guidance Counselling service is subject to all relevant legal requirements, to the provisions of the 1998 Education Act, to DES directives and circulars, to the school's ethos and the direction of the Board of Management. The Guidance Counsellor like all other members of staff in the school is entrusted with the care of their students in place of the parent/guardian and accepts the responsibilities of this position, keeping the students' welfare to the forefront always.

Reporting and Referral Procedures

Reporting - In both personal counselling and in Careers Guidance Interviews the confidentiality rule is followed i.e. school management and parents/guardians are informed if it is felt that the student is a danger to herself and/or to others or it is a legal requirement. The student is informed of the limits of confidentiality at the beginning of a session. If it is felt it is in the student's best interests to inform a Teacher/Parent/Guardian of a difficulty, this is only done with the knowledge and ideally the agreement of the student. In certain circumstances further advice and direction may be sought and reported if necessary, as per the School Safeguarding Statement. Such referrals are reported by the Principal at all Board of Management meetings.

Referral – All staff should use the schools 'Expression of Concern' Form (Appendix 8). Assistance for students will be sought from other qualified professionals outside the school, for areas of concern such as learning difficulties, substance abuse, bereavement, where school personnel considers necessary and appropriate. The Guidance Counsellor will supply all relevant information and seek the relevant permission from school authorities and parents or guardians. Teachers, school management and parents may refer students to the Guidance Counsellor. Clear procedures of referral, which have been agreed between the Principal, Staff, Parents and the Guidance Counsellor will be followed. Some strategies that can be used 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 Gardaí, NEPS and local support services such as TUSLA, CAMHS, Youth Centre, etc



Referrals In – The following is a list of people who may refer a student to the Guidance Counsellor or SEN Coordinator: Student (self-referral), Year Head, Guidance Counsellor, SEN Coordinator, Management, Parents, Staff, Caretakers, Secretaries or other Students.

Referrals Out -Management, Guidance Counsellor or SEN Coordinator may refer a student to outside agencies such as, External Counsellors, Pieta House, CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services), Social Services, NEPS, SENO, Túsla, Doctors, TRYS, Garda Síochana, Disability Access Officers in various Institutions

Procedure -Meet with Student (once-off / or contract for number of sessions /or refer on as necessary) Explain limits of confidentiality, draw up working contract, keep counselling record, contact parents by phone and/or letter and issue parental consent form if necessary (referral out).

Record-Keeping Procedures

Record keeping is an integral part of the administration of the Guidance and Counselling Service in St Anne's Secondary School. All records will be kept in accordance with the 'Freedom of Information Act', EU GDPR Guidelines and the School's Data Protection Policy.

Records of all personal counselling sessions with students are kept in a locked filing cabinet in the guidance office or on the password protected office computer. Counselling notes for each session are kept to a minimum.

Records of all one-to-one individual Educational/Career Guidance Interviews are now kept on the computer and this computer is password protected.

The guidance counsellor records the names of students calling to the office and records reason under the headings social and personal, educational or career.

Results of psychometric tests are stored on the computer and individual results are printed when necessary.

Records of Interest Test results, Multiple Intelligence Test results, Learning Styles results etc are kept by students in their Careers Folder/Reach + file. These records are also used by the guidance counsellor to help facilitate one-to-one meetings

Record keeping involves:

- Keeping student records for a minimum of 7 years.
- The detailed records of personal counselling sessions should contain some of the actual words and phrases used by the client.
- To ensure accuracy the Counsellor should try to write up notes as soon as possible after the session.
- Keeping notes as brief as possible.
- Only facts are collected, not opinions



Continuous Professional Development

The Guidance Counsellor keeps abreast of on-going changes in the fields of training, education, work and child welfare. The Board of Management and School Management pays the IGC's annual subscription for the Guidance Counsellor, regularly facilitates the attendance of the guidance counsellor at relevant events and at in-career professional training and counselling supervision during the school year. Participation in these events is always related to the objectives of the school guidance programme.

- Membership of Institute of Guidance Counsellors. Guidance Counsellor attends Kildare IGC meetings and CPD courses (Tuesday afternoons online/ in person – 5 per year)
- Attendance at Supervision (Tuesday afternoons Naas 5 per year)
- Yearly attendance at IGC National Conference
- Attend IGC Kildare Branch meetings
- Yearly attendance at Autumn CAO Conference
- Attend Guidance Counsellors information sessions at the Open Days in the different universities.
- Engage with CPD to continue to support the delivery of Guidance in the school. Record of CPD completed is kept by the Guidance Counsellors.



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Whole School Guidance Goals

1. Using 'Future Sparks' Study skills self assessment, the students will complete a questionnaire to explore and identify their preferred Learning styles.
2. Study skills to be delivered to all. 'Drop everything and work on Study Skills'. Whole School approach.
3. Subject Posters outlining the opportunities that each subject offers to be displayed in all classrooms.



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Reference

<https://www.ncge.ie/guidance-post-primary>

<https://www.ncge.ie/resource/ncge-whole-school-guidance-framework>

https://www.ncge.ie/sites/default/files/ncge/uploads/PI_Sch_Gui_prog_leaf.pdf



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*Nollaig Meiric
8/2/2024*