

Whole School Guidance Policy



Date Updated: January 2020

MISSION STATEMENT

Kinsale Community School is committed to:

- enabling all students to fulfil their academic, intellectual, moral, spiritual, social, cultural and physical potential.
- fostering the development of personal responsibility
- engendering a spirit of co-operation and mutual respect among students, staff, management, parents and the wider community
- facilitating the professional development of staff in a safe and caring environment.

SCHOOL GUIDANCE POLICY

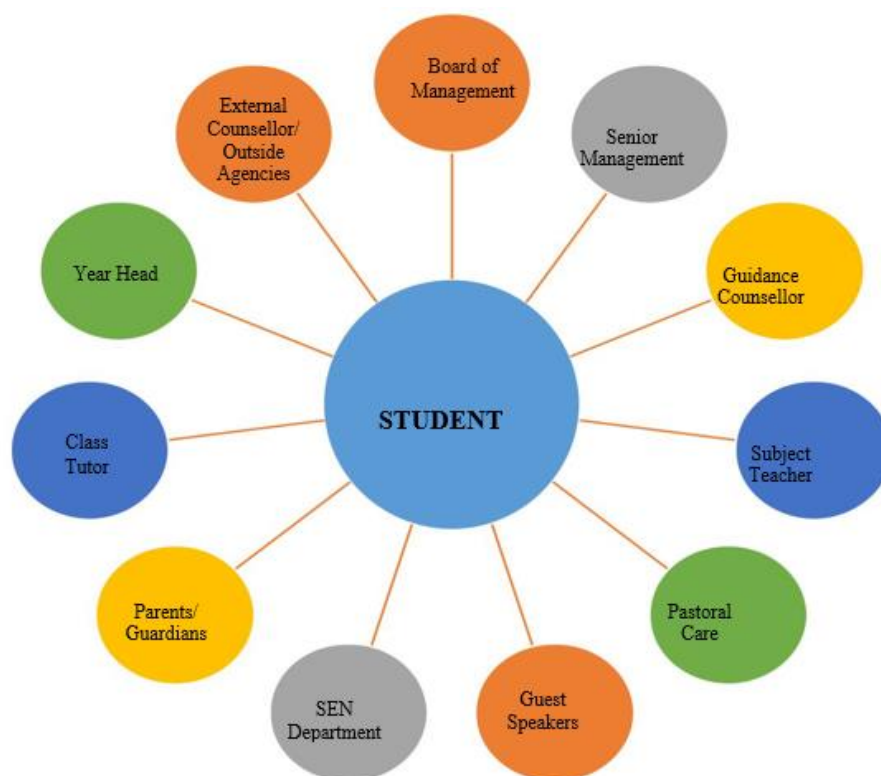
Guidance is regarded as a core element of the school's overall programme. The guidance programme seeks to respond to the needs of the students at all stages of their education in the school. A School Guidance Plan provides an essential framework for delivery of the school's guidance programme. Successful planning ensures a structured response to the educational, vocational and personal/social needs of the students. Whole School Guidance Planning is a work in progress and will be monitored, evaluated and reviewed regularly.

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, educational and career), all members of the teaching staff are in some way involved in providing guidance to students.

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 maximizes 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:

Personnel involved in the Provision of Guidance

- Guidance Counsellors
- Principal
- Deputy Principals
- Chaplain
- Year Heads
- Class Teachers
- TY Co-ordinator
- Learning Support Co-ordinator
- SEN Co-ordinator
- SEN Team
- RE Teachers
- SPHE Co-ordinator/Teachers



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

3.1 GUIDANCE COUNSELLORS

There are two Guidance Counsellors in Kinsale Community School:

- Ms. Lisa Daunt – 22 hours
- Ms. Ailish Egan – 11 hours

Both are fully qualified and are full members of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors.

Professional Development of Guidance Counsellors

- Both Guidance Counsellors attend various workshop/professional trainings organised by the Cork Branch of the IGC (Institute of Guidance Counsellors). These are offered approx. once every three/four weeks and include professional speakers on issues such as self-harm, alcohol/drug misuse, best practice in record keeping, eating disorders, stress and anxiety, depression in young people etc. Speakers from

colleges/universities/UK (UCAS)/ Europe (Eunicas) and industry come and update Guidance Counsellors on recent changes and many industrial 'site visits' are organised.

- A bi-annual Career's Fair is attended by FET colleges and Universities onsite in Kinsale Community School.
- Every year the IGC host their national conference and both Guidance Counsellors attempt to attend at least one of the two days and participate in the many workshops which are pertinent to the work of guidance counselling.
- Both Guidance Counsellors attend counselling supervision which is delivered in a group setting. The purpose of this is to provide support for guidance counsellors in their counselling work within the school setting and to ensure that 'best practice' in the delivery of the service is maintained.
- Guidance Counsellors also attend the UCC, CIT and CAO Guidance Counsellor Conferences every year.

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 assisting the SEN co-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. 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 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 chaplain. The guidance

counsellor has strong links with outside supportive agencies and is a member of the pastoral care and critical incident teams.

The Guidance counsellor is involved in testing pupils, and assists in the accommodation of pupils with learning difficulties at examination time. The Guidance counsellor is involved in delivering central aspects of the LCA programme such Vocational Preparation. They are on the core planning team for the LCA programme. 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.

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 Comprehensive Schools. Each school is required to comply with the Education Act (1998) and provide students with "access to appropriate guidance".

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 Principals are in charge of the school in the absence of the Principal. The Senior Management team also have 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.

Pastoral Care Team

The Pastoral Care Team is made up of Management, Guidance Counsellor, TY Coordinator and SEN Coordinator. The Team meet weekly to review the needs of students. This is a forum for sharing information and concerns in a safe and confidential setting. What is discussed at Pastoral Care 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.

SEN Coordinator

The SEN Coordinator directs the provision and application of resources for students with special educational needs and/or specific learning difficulties. They liaise with the Deputy Principals and all staff, parents/guardians and outside agencies. They apply for resources including resource hours, special needs assistants and assistive technology. The Deputy Principal oversees timetables for students requiring learning support and assistance. The SEN coordinator and Deputy Principal liaise with special needs assistants, Guidance counsellor, Year heads, subject teachers and Principal.

Subject teachers

Subject teachers have final line role of responsibility for the education of all students in their classes. The subject teacher is the 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/LS/SEN Coordinator when specialist competence is required with due regard to confidentiality.

(G) Other Support Staff

- **Class Teacher**

The class teacher takes a particular interest in the activities and progress of the students in a class group, and helps the students to be positive in their behaviour and work. In addition, the class teacher serves as a special link between the school administration and the students, and co-operates with the year head in ensuring the students observance of the school rules.

- **Year Head**

The Year Head has general responsibility for the welfare of a year group. The year head oversees the student's attendance, punctuality, academic performance and behaviour and liaises with the parents/guardians of the year group. The Year Head works closely with the

subject teachers, class teachers, Guidance counsellor, Chaplain, Deputy Principal and Principal. The Year Head also links with outside agencies in conjunction with the above.

- **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 so as to augment and support existing provision.

- **Parents/Guardians**

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. The Parents' Association, too, in hosting seminars builds the personal capacity of parents. 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.
 - Contributing to the development and review of the school guidance plan. And when possible
- Providing personal assistance to the school guidance programme.

- **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 Kinsale Community School. Students have an important part to play in creating and sustaining

a positive atmosphere of mutual trust and respect that nurtures teaching and learning. The Student Council affords students an opportunity to voice their opinion and become involved in the daily life of their School.

Wellbeing, SPHE, RE and CSPE cover many aspects of Personal and Social 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. As Kinsale Community 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, class teacher, year head, guidance counsellor, deputy principal and principal as they see fit. Fellow students also have a part to play in supporting their peers in difficulty.

3.2 PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES

PASTORAL CARE MEETINGS

Pastoral Care meetings are held weekly for two class periods, one for senior classes (Y4, Y5, Y6) and one for junior classes (Y1, Y2, Y3). Year heads attend these meetings in rotation, so attend once every four weeks while the Principal, Deputy Principals, Chaplain, relevant year head and both Guidance Counsellors attend all meetings. The purpose of these meetings is to ensure that we are constantly mindful of the wellbeing of our students as we believe it is core to their school experience. Any concerns about particular students are brought to the attention of the care team by the Year Head or any other attendee and adequate supports/responses are agreed. These responses may include calls to parents, referral to Guidance Counsellor/Chaplain, extra study support or referrals to outside agencies (CAHMS, NEPS, GP, TUSLA) etc. This meeting is collaborative by nature. Its purpose is to:

- co-ordinate the support available for students in the school
- facilitate links to the community and other non-school support services
- enable students with support needs to continue to access a full education
- assist staff to manage those students effectively
- ensure new staff members are briefed about policies and procedures relating to student wellbeing and support
- advise school management on the development and review of effective student support policies and structures.

- share information (appropriately) and expertise thus providing students in need with appropriate support

REFERRALS

Internal referrals

- Referrals of students to the Guidance Counsellor may arise from these meetings.
- Students can self-refer to the Guidance Counsellor.
- School staff, parents and guardians may also refer.
- Counselling support in school is capped at six sessions after which outside support is sought.

External referrals

- The Principal as the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) may in consultation with the Guidance Counsellor refer to outside agencies such as the HSE, NEPS etc.
- The Guidance counsellors, in conjunction with students, and/or parents, refer to other outside professionals where appropriate.

APPOINTMENTS

All Students who have an appointment for personal or career counselling are provided with an appointment slip. The student must provide their relevant teacher with this appointment slip, who signs it before the student presents for their appointment. Parents/Guardians make appointments with the Guidance Counsellor by telephoning the school.

Appointments are conducted during the school day. All parties are requested to inform each other if a cancellation is necessary. On occasion, the Guidance Counsellor may request another staff member e.g. Year Head, subject teacher or/and management to be present at a meeting. Notes are kept of all meetings by the Guidance Counsellor.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Counselling relationships and information that is disclosed in counselling relationships are kept confidential. However, the exceptions to this rule is explained to all students at the beginning of all counselling/support contracts. Namely, that outside support will be sought should the Guidance Counsellor be concerned that a student is a danger to themselves (suicidal, self-harm, eating disorders etc.) or a danger to somebody else, if a crime has been committed or that there

are child protection issues. Confidentiality also cannot apply should a court order a school to make records available.

Students are encouraged to discuss their problem with their parent/guardian where appropriate.

TESTING

Both Guidance Counsellors are qualified by virtue of their professional training to administer and interpret psychometric tests. The DATS (Differential Aptitude Test) is undertaken in transition year while the CATS (Cognitive Ability Test) is administered to incoming first years. At senior cycle an array of career/personality inventories are administered. These tests are administered and feedback given in accordance with the code of ethics of the IGC. Confidentiality, storage and delivery of results is of central importance.

RECORD KEEPING

Records of all personal, career or educational guidance are kept and securely stored in the Guidance Counsellor's office. All records will be kept in accordance with the 'Freedom of Information Act' and the 'Data Protection Act'.

SYSTEMS OF COMMUNICATION

In the role of Guidance Counsellor appropriate communication is core. These channels of communication include

Parents

- Email/telephone/one-to-one meetings/information evenings/school website (under 'Guidance and Support')/Guidance Newsletters/letters home/SMS

Students

- Email/telephone/one-to-one meetings/class room/group information sessions/school website/assemblies/newsletters/school Guidance noticeboards/school wellbeing (Amber Flag Noticeboard)/visiting school speakers

Teachers

- Email/telephone/SMS/one-to-one meetings/pastoral care meetings/subject meetings/SEN meetings etc

Outside Agencies

- Email/telephone/SMS

Ratified by the Board of Management on: 28th January 2020

Signature of the Chairperson, Board of Management:

Sr Rita Twomey

Signature of the Secretary, Board of Management:

Seamus Carty.