

Sligo Grammar School

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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.
- 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

Miss Cecilia McGuinness

Number of Guidance Hours

Total number of students in school: 491

Total number of hours: 22 hours for Guidance Counsellor

Total number of hours for Wellbeing in Junior Cycle: 400 hours over 3 years for 1st years since 2021.

Allocation of time by Guidance Counsellor

Year Group	Class Allocation
1 st Year	Weekly SPHE class
2 nd Year	No class contact
3 rd Year	No class contact
Transition Year	1 class per week per week per class group 1 individual appointment regarding subject choice
5 th Year	1 class per week per class group Numerous individual appointments
6 th Year	1 class per week per class group Numerous individual appointments

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

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

Guidance Plan

1st Year

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: 1.5
CSPE: 1.5

1ST Year Guidance Plan

Personal and Social Education

Transition from primary to secondary school;

- School Prospectus
- Transition Day in February
- Orientation Programme
- Mentoring Programme
- Individual meetings for all first years if necessary
- Individual form teacher

Making New Friends

- Transition Day in February
- Orientation Programme (September)
- Mentoring Programme
- SPHE Programme

- Individual meetings for all 1st years
- Information day 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

2nd Year Guidance Plan

The Guidance Plan for second year pupils is developed and delivered in co cooperation 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 Educational areas are: positive mental health, decision making, relationships and sexuality, bullying, substance misuse and healthy eating. In the area of Educational Guidance there are no specific topics covered while in the Career Guidance area, the topics covered are: goal setting, motivation and study 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 second year students. The following page presents a

details overview of how each topic is explored and delivered in various settings and by various individuals.

The Study Skills Programme is similar to the programme for first year and is therefore contained in the appendix.

Number of weekly timetabled classes:

Guidance: 0

SPHE: 1.5

CSPE: 1.5

2nd Year Guidance Plan

Personal and Social Education

Bullying	SPHE Programme CSPE Programme Group Mediation Invited Speaker/Drama
Positive Mental Health	SPHE Programme Invited speakers
Substance Misuse	SPHE Programme Invited speakers
Decision Making	SPHE Programme CSPE Programme
Healthy Eating	SPHE Programme CSPE Programme
Relationships and Sexuality	SPHE Programme CSPE Programme RE Programme

Educational Guidance & Careers Education

Goal Setting	SPHE Programme Guidance
Motivation	SPHE Programme
Study Skills	Study Skills Programme SPHE Programme

3rd Year Guidance Plan

The Guidance Plan for third 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: positive mental health, relationships and sexuality, healthy peer relationships, health and safety, substance misuse, stress and exam pressure.

These topics have been identified by the Guidance Planning Group and the general staff as the most important topics in the Guidance Plan for third 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:	0
	SPHE:	1.5
	CSPE:	1.5

3rd Year Guidance Plan

Personal and Social Education

Positive Mental Health	SPHE Programme Invited speakers
Substance Misuse	SPHE Programme Invited speakers
Healthy peer relationships	SPHE Programme CSPE Programme Group Mediation Invited Speaker/Drama
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

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: type 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 follow various set assignments and have three weeks of work experience placements.

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

CAT Testing and Feedback	Group testing Written test results Individual meetings for each student
Senior Cycle Information	Class Presentations Information Booklet Information Night for parents Individual appointments Appointments for parents if necessary Programme co-ordinators
Subject Choice	Class Presentations Information Booklet Information Night for parents Individual appointments Appointments for parents
Types of College	Class Presentation
World of Work	Class Presentation

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

Work Experience

Transition Year students complete 3 weeks of work experience co-ordinated by the Guidance Counsellor. They also have Taster Days at ATU Sligo.

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 class per week all year
	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 'Careers Night':

Qualifications (NFQ)	Class Presentation
Progression Routes	Class Presentation
Type of College	Class Presentation
Study Methods and Study Timetable	Class Presentation
How to find Information; Prospectus, Internet, Interviews	
UCAS	Class Presentation
The Points System	Class Presentations Information Booklet
College and course entry requirements	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, 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.

All sixth year students get a minimum of two forty minute individual career appointments where they can discuss their career intentions and find out information about various colleges and courses. Many students also avail of additional appointments to further clarify their options. The Guidance Counsellors are also present in the school on the day the Leaving Certificate results are released and are available in the school on the following days when college offers are being made. Students are able to discuss issues either in person or by telephone. Class presentations on many of these topics are available in the appendix.

Number of weekly timetabled classes: Guidance: 1 careers class per week.

6th Year Guidance Plan

Educational Guidance

National Framework of Qualifications	Class presentation
Ladder of Progression	Class presentation Invited Speakers
Points System	Class presentation
Finance and grants	Class presentation Invited speakers Parents Night
Transition to college	Class presentations Invited speakers Database of past pupils
Accommodation	Class presentation Invited speakers
Budgeting	Class presentation Invited speakers

Personal safety	Class presentation Invited speakers
Careers Education	
Individual career areas	Class presentation
Goal setting	Class presentation
Motivation and study skills	Class presentation
UCAS & CAO	Class presentations Video CAO Information Evening Invited Speakers
PLC courses	Class presentations Invited speakers
Apprenticeships	Class presentations Invited speakers

Careers Events

For the past number of years, a CAO Information Evening has been held for the parents and guardians of all traditional Leaving Certificate students. This night is conducted and organised by the Guidance Counsellor in collaboration with local schools and ATU Sligo. The location is ATU Sligo campus and the following topics were covered in various presentations: CAO Application process, Grants, HEAR, DARE, 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 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.

Signed _____ Liz Greer _____ Date ____10 February 2025_____
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed _____ Michael Hall _____ Date ____10 February 2025_____
Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management